

Hafa Adai!

BOE's Ada: Lifting austerity at PSS is suicide. **PAGE 3**
Man arrested for incident that happened 6 months ago. **PAGE 7**

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Deadline on HR 559 looms; still no regs

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

Nearly 180 days after the en-

actment of H.R. 559—the legislation that gave CNMI residency to over 1,000 eligible parolees—there's still no

regulation governing the new law that would allow those affected to start applying for CNMI residency.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is required to come up

with those regulations but, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), that

See HR 559 on Page 4

Bellas leaving after 38 years

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Former Superior Court associate judge Timothy H. Bellas is leaving the CNMI, which has been his home for almost 38 years.



Bellas

"I was fortunate that events in my life brought me to these beautiful islands, and thank everyone for years of kindness and friendship," Bellas said in an email yesterday to confirm *Saipan Tribune*'s information that that he had closed his of-

See BELLAS on Page 4

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The number of visitors from China continues to decline in the CNMI and that is starting to worry Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce, who suggested exploring other source markets for tourists.

At the same time, Aldan-Pierce laments that many of the factors affecting the CNMI's visitor arrivals are beyond the CNMI's control, such as the ongoing Hong Kong protests that is creating a bottleneck for tourists



Aldan-Pierce

who have to transit through Hong Kong before flying to Saipan.

"There's a lot of things right now that's just totally beyond our control," she said when asked Wednesday about the recent suspension of some

charter flights from China and the suspension of flights from Hong Kong.

Southern China Airlines recently announced the suspension of two of its four charter

See CHINA on Page 4



Death toll in Samoa measles epidemic: 62

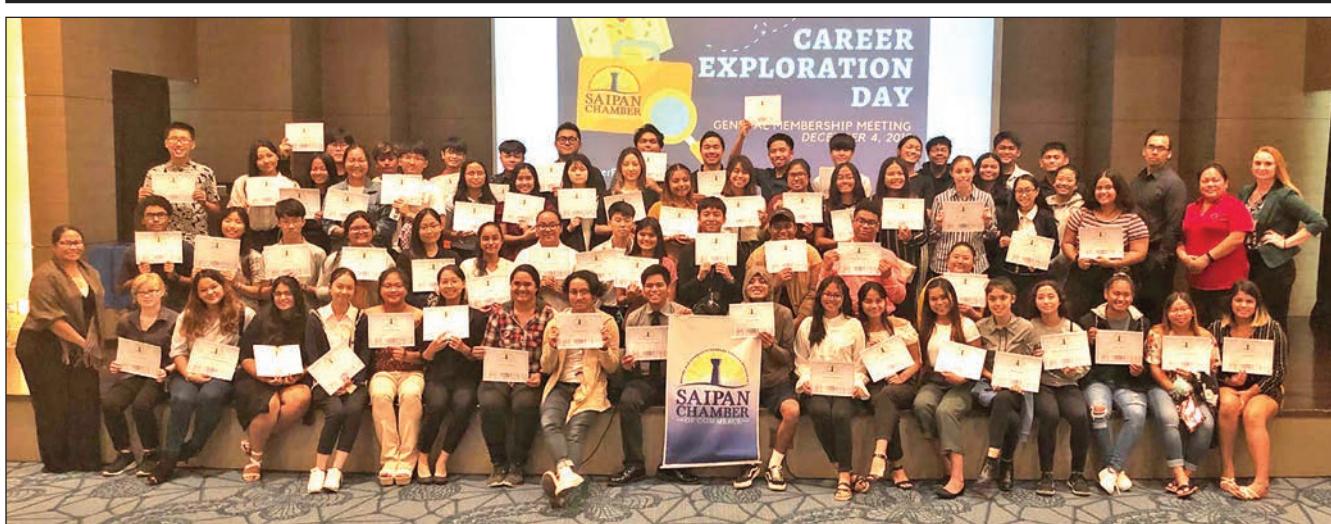
In this image from video, a red flag hangs outside homes of residents who have not been vaccinated in Apia, Samoa, Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

AP

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Samoa's main streets were eerily quiet on Thursday as the government stepped up efforts to curb a measles epidemic that has killed 62 people.

The government told most public and private workers to

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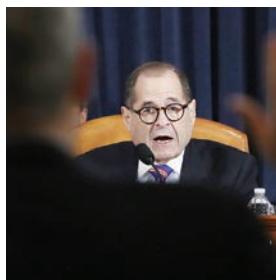


CAREER EXPLORATION DAY

Participants of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Career Exploration Day pose for a picture last Wednesday shortly after the Chamber's general membership meeting at the Saipan World Resort. Over 70 students participated in last Wednesday's Career Exploration Day. The students, coming from all the high schools throughout Saipan, were paired with over 30 Chamber businesses.

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A different chairman. A committee twice the size. A shift from evidence to law.

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OFF THE WALL

The European Union says putting domestic cats on a leash would deny its right to roam.

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LIFE & STYLE

Henry Cavill says the "door hasn't closed" on his return as Superman in the DC universe.

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Local

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The Department of Land and

Natural Resources, through its Division of Fish and Wildlife, has teamed up with the Saipan Fishermen's Association to

teach the younger members of the community the different species of fish, as well as spearfishing.

DFW Fisheries supervisor Mike Tenorio said what they are trying to teach goes beyond the experience of catching a fish into understanding the behavior of the fish itself.

"...You need to understand how the fish behaves, what do they do, where are they at, when are their peak seasons. This builds to the person's understanding of how to harvest and when to harvest and when not to harvest," he said

Members of the Youth Fishing Club of the Saipan Fishermen's Association were shown the different species of fish found in the Marianas, and were taught the markers that would help them identify the fish easily, as well as information on where the fish are usually found.

Tenorio, who himself started fishing as a young boy by going with his relatives when they went fishing, still fishes these days, but more for research.

"We do what's called a fish

Learning that goes into understanding fish behavior



DFW Fisheries supervisor Mike Tenorio shows members of the Saipan Fishermen's Association Youth Fishing Club the tools for spearfishing, as he talked about its dangers and how to avoid them. The talk is part of the eight-month SFA Youth Fishing program, which started in September this year.

IVA MAURIN

life history study," Tenorio explained. "We go out and we sample certain targeted food fish species to understand the reproductive cycle—their age and maturity and at what point in their life or age do they become reproductively mature. From that, we use to try to manage the resources that are being sold in the market."

Aside from fish species, DFW also talked about spearfishing, some of its dangers, what to expect, and how

to avoid those dangers.

"Nowadays, there's a lot of media experiencing [and showing] spearfishing," Tenorio said. "But getting out and doing it yourself, getting out into the world and seeing things for yourself helps in ground truthing. Experiencing it is different from seeing it on TV. It is a healthy way of life, it's a way of understanding your resources."

The DFW has been a part of the SFA's outreach pro-

gram since June, to talk about the fish species in the Marianas, which the batch of new young fishermen should know before they head out to the open ocean.

Set to run for eight months, the SFA Youth Fishing program supports SFA's vision to give the youth an understanding of ocean preservation and the fishery industry in the CNMI. For more information, visit SFA at <https://www.facebook.com/sfacnmi/>.

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BOE's Ada: Lifting austerity at PSS is suicide

By MARC A. VENUS
marc_venus@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former Board of Education chair MaryLou Ada believes that lifting the ongoing austerity measures at the Public School System would be "suicide."

Speaking at yesterday's BOE meeting on Capitol Hill, Ada, who also chairs the BOE's Fiscal, Personnel, and Administration Committee, said the repercussions PSS currently face after Super Ty-

phoon Yutu in October 2018 are too strenuous for the system and lifting the austerity measures is too risky.

She told the board that the FPA committee met with PSS officials last Wednesday to discuss lifting the austerity measures but they ultimately decided to put off deciding on the matter.

Ada said the repairs on several PSS schools damaged from Super Typhoon Yutu must be dealt with, as she

previously requested PSS officials to get schools out of double sessions by January 2020.

"If we were to lift austerity measures, we need to consider other expenses like operations, utilities, gas, repairs, and many more. ... This would increase our debt and if we could find a funding source, then we can discuss lifting [the austerity measures]," she said.

The board later took no action on the matter.

Ada said the board should

take no action right now, because the FPA must get more information from PSS about its other options in order to lift the austerity measures.

Interim Budget and Finance director Kimo Rosario earlier said that PSS needs a bare minimum of \$42 million in order to run operations. Right now, PSS is budgeted for \$37.7 million for fiscal year 2020. This amount is the projected 25% that PSS will receive from the central government, as mandated by the CNMI Constitution.

He said PSS has implement-

ed a 15% operational budget cuts in certain schools in order to balance out operation budgets on smaller PSS schools. Rosario added that lifting austerity measures without sufficient funding will put PSS under \$6 million to \$7 million worth of debt by the end of fiscal year 2020.

Newly installed Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada noted that lifting austerity is risky at this moment, since PSS just got out of its debt from outside vendors prior to his appointment. He said PSS

should consider "dealing with the present" issues PSS is undergoing, that being the repairs of school facilities in order to return schools to full sessions.

He added that PSS and the board must understand that sustainable funding does not favor the lifting of austerity measures right now. "We don't have money right now, we must understand that we need to use the money we have now for what we can spend sparingly," he said.

PSS is currently running a 72-hour work week.

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Over 70 participate in Chamber's Career Exploration Day

By MARC A. VENUS
marc_venus@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Over 70 students participated in last Wednesday's Saipan Chamber of Commerce Career Exploration Day. The students, coming from all high schools throughout Saipan, were paired with over 30 Chamber member-businesses and were exposed to hands-on experience similar to the traditional job shadowing process.

Later that day, the students were recognized by the Chamber during its general membership meeting at the

Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall, during which both Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente and Northern Marianas Trades Institute CEO Agnes McPhetres spoke about the event's importance.

Benavente focused on the importance of getting these students into the workforce quickly and effectively before the CNMI's foreign worker program, called the CW program, expires in 2029, as mandated by law.

She said that the uncertainty of the CW program's ending gave businesses in the CNMI

a major scare, since majority of employees were under the CW program and the extension gave more time for the CNMI to invest in its youth to get them into the workforce.

"Working with the trades industry is DOL's current priorities since the trades industry is the most requested workforce in the CNMI," Benavente said. She added that the end of October 2019 saw over 11,000 job vacancy announcements posted on the DOL website.

McPhetres, on the other hand, said students should be open to the idea of investing

in the trades industry, since college is not the only option available to them.

McPhetres said NMTI has been working closely with CNMI DOL through the Apprenticeship Program, which allows students to work as apprentices in the trades industry to prepare them with the proper certification as soon as they complete an apprenticeship program.

She said NMTI has been working with PSS on the hotel and restaurant trades program, as she mentioned that NMTI and Da'Ok Academy are cur-

rently holding classes with one another. Da'Ok Academy is currently stationed at the NMTI campus in Lower Base.

McPhetres, on the other hand, said students should be open to the idea of investing

to NMHC. Rosario said Gov. Ralph DLG previously assured that PSS will be approved under the CDBG-DR program, as NMHC will be managing the CDBG-DR funds for the recovery projects.

And although PSS may receive this funding, the CDBG-DR program funding will only cover a portion of the costs of repairs, Rosario said. "For example, if the Hopwood [Middle School] repairs costs \$24 million, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency covers \$10 million, the CDBG-DR funding will cover the remaining \$14 million," he said during the BOE's special meeting yesterday.

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada agreed with

Rosario's initiative to get the debt dealt with, as the CDBG-DR program will open doors for PSS to be able to begin and complete its projects to not only repair but expand its schools.

PSS is slated to receive over \$700,000 worth of reimbursements from FEMA and Ada said that getting the CDBG-DR funding will boost the process of getting PSS back up and running.

The CDBG-DR program is under the U.S. Housing and Urban Development. HUD announced on Tuesday that the CNMI will be getting over \$243 million for recovery funding from Super Typhoon Yutu, which hit Saipan and Tinian on October 2018.

beauty, but also because they have been his home.

He has a daughter and now a grandson who was born on the island.

"I have made so many close friends here and it will be very hard to not see them every day. I am part of this community and it is part of me," he said.

Bellas said he knows that people come and go through the Commonwealth, but that he would like to think that each person leaves behind some contribution.

As a lawyer, Bellas said he has tried to help other people;

as a judge, to bring justice to those who need it; and as a member of the community, to give more than he has received.

He was a special judge and then associate judge of the CNMI Superior Court.

Bellas has served as a justice and judge pro tem of the CNMI Supreme and Superior Court since 2002.

He has been president of the CNMI Bar Association and chaired the CNMI Bar Association Disciplinary Committee for more than 10 years.

He was an assistant attorney

general, registrar at the Registrar of Corporations, deputy legal counsel for the 4th House of Representatives, and the first chief legal counsel of the Legislative Bureau.

Bellas also worked for the U.S. Department of Justice as a staff attorney for the U.S. Trustee's Office for Guam and the CNMI.

He chaired the Government Oversight Board from 2003 to 2008.

Bellas said it will not be easy leaving but he is hoping that he will get to come back occasionally.

come up within six months, or 180 days, the step-by-step process of how aliens who are eligible to apply for CNMI-only resident status could start the process for applying for that status. The bill was enacted on June 26, 2019. That means DHS has up to the end of December to come out with the regulations.

P.L. 116-24 took almost five months of efforts to pass the U.S. Congress and enacted by Trump.

P.L. 116-24 applies to all immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and other stateless individuals, CNMI permanent residents and their IRs, IRs of citizens of Freely Associated

States (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau), and certain in-home caregivers of CNMI residents.

Sablan introduced the legislation last Jan. 15 and it passed the U.S. House of Representatives on June 3, 2019. The Senate passed it on June 24, 2019, and was enacted by Trump two days later.

Itos Feliciano, one of the 1,039 parolees, told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview that although he remains unconcerned, he would prefer to have the regulations sooner than later.

Feliciano told *Saipan Tribune*

that he had successfully applied for a re-parole, which would be valid until mid-2020, but the main kicker is that applying for an Employment Authorization Document, was a bit pricey.

"We pay for the EAD and when the regulations come out, we would then have to pay for the residency fees. We'd have to pay more than we need to," he said.

According to Feliciano, he had to pay \$498 for an EAD.

"That is our permission to work. If the new residency regulations come out and the EAD is still valid for several months, then it's a waste of money," he added.

rently holding classes with one another. Da'Ok Academy is currently stationed at the NMTI campus in Lower Base.

Shortly after the Chamber meeting, the participants were

exposed to workshops on how to go through job interviews, how to save for the future, and other presentations that will help them once they graduate high school.

SAMOA

From Page 1

stay home on Thursday and Friday and shut down roads to nonessential vehicles as teams began going door-to-door to administer vaccines.

Families in the Pacific island nation were asked to hang red flags from their houses if they needed to be vaccinated.

Most of those who have died from the virus are young, with 54 deaths among children aged 4 or younger.

The *Samoa Observer* newspaper said the normally bustling capital Apia was a ghost town on Thursday, with only birds nesting in the rooftops and stray dogs roaming the streets.

Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi told reporters the vaccine drive was unprecedented in the nation's history.

He said one challenge was that a lot of people hadn't considered that measles could be deadly.

"They seem to take a kind of lackadaisical attitude to all the warnings that we had issued through the television and also through the radio," he said.

Another challenge, he said,

was that others had been seeking help from traditional healers, who had been successfully treating tropical diseases in Samoa for some 4,000 years.

"Some of our people pay a visit to traditional healers thinking that measles is a typical tropical disease, which it is not," the prime minister said.

Samoan authorities believe the virus was first spread by a traveler from New Zealand.

The nation declared a national emergency last month and mandated that all 200,000 people get vaccinated. The government has also closed all schools and banned children from public gatherings.

According to the government, more than 4,000 people have contracted the disease since the outbreak began and 172 people remain in hospitals, including 19 children in critical condition.

Figures from the World Health Organization and UNICEF indicate that fewer than 30% of Samoan infants were immunized last year. That low rate was exacerbated by a medical mishap that killed two babies who were administered a vaccine that had been incorrectly mixed, causing wider delays and distrust in the vaccination program.

claimed that she was made to undergo a pregnancy test, Aldan-Pierce said they asked MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo to reach out to the airline to find out more about that issue.

Aldan-Pierce said they have never heard of anything like that. "It's a horrible invasion of privacy," she said.

The chairwoman said they just want to find out more about it and hopefully "prevent other people from having to go through what this poor lady went [through] unnecessarily."

Aldan-Pierce informed Iakopo at the last board meeting that they just learned about the incident that apparently happened in Hong Kong where a passenger was told to take an invasive pregnancy test.

The chairwoman said they would like to reach out to the airlines to find more about the incident so they can prevent this from happening again. The letter writer had said that she was made to undergo the pregnancy test by staff of Hong Kong Express.

Aldan-Pierce instructed Iakopo to meet with Hong Kong Express and discuss the matter.

"Just a way that it will not happen to anybody again," she said.

BOE OK's payment to NMHC

By MARC A. VENUS
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REPORTER

The Board of Education has approved to pay the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. over \$96,000 in a move that would make the Public School System eligible for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant program.

PSS acting Finance and Budget director Kimo Rosario told the board in their meeting last month that PSS should prioritize paying its debt with NMHC, as the CDBG's Disaster Recovery program can help PSS with its funding issues on repairs for its schools.

This debt of over \$96,000

BELLAS

From Page 1

fice and is moving to the U.S. mainland.

The former judge is leaving the Commonwealth on Dec. 16. He will be moving to the vicinity of Seattle, Washington.

For Bellas, more important than his many professional accomplishments, is that he lived on Saipan longer than anywhere else in his life.

Bellas said he loves the islands not just because of their

HR 559

From Page 1

has yet to happen.

This legislation, now known as Public Law 116-24, affects a total of 1,039 parolees who received long-term humanitarian parole.

"...[Acting] secretary of Homeland Security [Chad Wolf] was legally required to have issued regulations by this week. He has not," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* when asked for updates on the regulations.

P.L. 116-24, among other things, mandates the Department of Homeland Security to

beauty, but also because they have been his home.

He has a daughter and now a grandson who was born on the island.

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Bellas said it will not be easy leaving but he is hoping that he will get to come back occasionally.

Another challenge, he said,

CHINA

From Page 1

flights from Shanghai and two charter flights from Guangzhou starting last Dec. 2.

Of particular concern for the MVA is that the number of visitors from the People's Republic of China keeps declining. "What we understand is that there's a lot of external factors that's way beyond our control," Aldan-Pierce said, adding that MVA may need to look for opportunities elsewhere other than just the China market.

Another concern is the suspension of flights from Hong Kong since last week due to ongoing protests. Aldan-Pierce said that, on a bigger scale, the ongoing Hong Kong protest is part of the reason why the inbound numbers from China continues to decline. She pointed out that some of the CNMI's visitors are actually from southern China and go through Hong Kong before coming here.

"[The protests] prevent people from going into Hong Kong to get those flights," Aldan-Pierce said.

As for a recent letter to the editor of a woman traveling through Hong Kong who

MVA to solicit bids to create Zen garden

The Marianas Visitors Authority's board of directors has approved the issuance of an invitation to bid to transform the Japanese Peace Memorial at the Banzai Cliff in Marpi into a tranquil Zen garden.

The project is estimated to cost between \$950,000 and \$1.2 million.

At the MVA board's meeting Wednesday, MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo asked the directors to approve the announcement of an invitation to bid so they can solicit proposals for the project already. Iakopo said they have already the design and the scope of work.

When asked how much the project is going to cost MVA, Iakopo said, "We don't know how much exactly the amount would be. Obviously, we're hoping that we stay within budget."

When MVA director Chris Nelson reiterated his question about the estimated cost, MVA destination enhancement specialist Tatiana Babauta disclosed that it is estimated to cost from \$950,000 to \$1.2 million.

MVA chair Marian Aldan-Pierce said the project includes the realignment of the road, the pavement of the scenic area, and then landscaping. The existing restroom and the pavilion will remain there.

Aldan-Pierce said if the board approves the invitation to bid, it does not mean that MVA is committed to the project. She said the board can decide later whether or not they are going to move forward with the construction.

Iakopo suggested that it would be best to put a language in the announcement that the project may be cancelled due to non-availability of funds.

Aldan-Pierce agreed. The chair and other directors present—Warren Villagomez, Agida Quituga, Nelson, Thomas Liu, and Nick Nishikawa—approved the issuance of the invitation to bid without further discussion.

In a later interview, Aldan-Pierce said the Peace Memorial improvements is one of the projects that the board really wants to proceed with. Aldan-Pierce said it was their focus for 2019, but that they're not going to move it until 2020.

"Because people go there. There's a lot of memorial, a lot of historical things that happened there. And the way it is today is very stark and uninviting," the chair said.

Aldan-Pierce said they would like to re-route the road going to the existing shrines. Where the road is today breaks that up, she said. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*



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Rental car parked at AMP is burglarized

An unknown burglar or group of burglars has victimized a rental car that was parked at the American Memorial Park in Garapan last Monday. Department of Public Safety officers are now looking into the case.

Police received a 911 call reporting the burglary incident on Monday, Dec. 2, 2019, at

about 6:02pm.

Police dispatched to the scene met with the caller, who stated that their group had parked their rental car, a red Ford Mustang, in the parking lot of the American Memorial Park for a few hours before returning back. The victims mentioned that they parked their vehicle at

about 10:30am and returned at 4:30pm. That's when the victims noticed that their bags were no longer in the vehicle. They notified their rental car company before calling for police assistance.

The items reported missing include a black backpack, a silver-colored Digno cellphone, a silver-colored

Apple MacBook Air laptop, a pink Apple Watch, a brown Berluti wallet, a pair of white Apple AirPods, a red/purple key case, a white tote bag, and one red/purple Cartier wallet, including the victim's passport and driver's license.

DPS would like to remind the public to be diligent when

purchasing electronics and/or designer wallets from unknown individuals as these items may have been stolen.

This case remains on going. If you have any information on the incident, call 911. If you wish to remain anonymous, call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. (*Saipan Tribune*)

TSL Foundation backs tourism promotion

Christmas came early for PDM Promoters, Inc., after

it received a \$2,000 donation from the Tan Siu Lin Founda-

tion for its beautification and tourism promotion projects.

Merlie Tolentino, executive director of the TSL Founda-

tion—the charitable arm of TanHoldings—turned over the check to PDM Promoters, Inc. director and chief executive officer Misako Kamata last month at the TanHoldings Corporate Affairs' office at JP Center.

"The progress and success of our programs have largely been due to contributions from our sponsors who have gone out of their way to lend financial support to us. With the assistance of generous donors in our community, like the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, we are able to achieve our goals and continue our programs," Kamata said. "We share a common goal of serving and helping our community."

The TSL Foundation's donation was used to purchase materials for the Christmas trees that are now on display at Paseo de Marianas as part of the island's holiday festivities. The financial assistance will also help PDM Promoters, Inc. in its monthly cleanup drive and for the uniforms and instruments used by the Saipan Awaodori Team.

The Saipan Awaodori Team, which is made up of local dancers and musicians, travels to Japan annually and performs in key places in Tokyo. This year, the group joined the Koenji Awaodori Festival—the largest gathering in Tokyo—and was featured in a Japanese television show, highlighting the performances that the group does in different events in the Commonwealth, such as the Liberation Day Parade and Christmas in the Marianas.

"The Tan Siu Lin Foundation is pleased to work with PDM Promoters, Inc., which for more than a decade has been helping promote our islands to Japanese tourists. They are also responsible for the Christmas Tree Decorating Contest that schools look forward to every year and brings the holiday spirit on island," Tolentino said.

She also commended PDM Promoters, Inc. for instilling in its staff and members of the Saipan Awaodori Team the importance of taking care of the environment by holding regular cleanup drives, especially in areas frequented by tourists. (PR)



PDM Promoters, Inc. director and chief executive officer Misako Kamata, fifth from left, receives the ceremonial check donation from Tan Siu Lin Foundation executive director Merlie Tolentino, sixth from left, last month at the JP Center. Also in the photo are members of the Saipan Awaodori Team and TSL Foundation administrative officer Mel Naputi, second from right.

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BIRTHDAY	80-100 PAX	101-150 PAX	151-180 PAX	181 PAX -
Lunch & Dinner	② 1 free Birthday Cake (7 inch / \$33)	① 1 free Birthday Cake (7 inch / \$33) ② 1 "Wed. / Fri. Lunch Buffet" G.C. for 2 pax (\$44)	① 1 free Birthday Cake (9 inch / \$53) ② 1 "Sunday Brunch" G.C. for 2 pax (\$64)	① 1 Birthday Cake (7inch. \$53) ② 1 "Seafood Night" G. C. for 2 pax (\$80) ③ 1 free btl of Champagne for toast (\$30)

Man arrested for incident that happened 6 months ago

A man was arrested at his workplace last Wednesday for an alleged child abuse incident that took place six months ago outside the Kagman High School's back fence.

According to a statement yesterday from the CNMI Department of Public Safety, Theodore Oronigo Pehnos was arrested at his workplace last Dec. 4 at 11:54am on a

warrant signed by Superior Court Associate Judge Wesley Bogdan last Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019, at 3:30pm.

Pehnos faces charges of child abuse, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. His cash bail was set at \$5,000.

The DPS statement said that it received a call from Kagman High School last June 4, 2019, at about 3:50pm, about

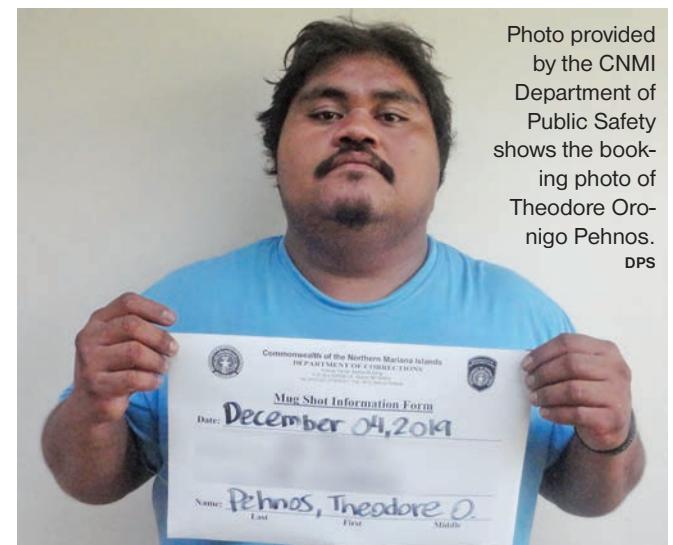
an alleged child abuse incident that had been witnessed by some of the school's staff.

Police who were dispatched to the scene met with a few individuals who saw the incident. The individuals stated that they noticed three minors—one female, two males—playing unaccompanied at the KHS basketball court. When a KHS staff asked one of the minors, if they had a guardian, the minors stated that they just wanted to hang out at the KHS basketball court as their parents weren't home.

As the KHS staff was calling Kagman Elementary School, the stepfather of the minors, lat-

er identified as Pehnos, walked over and yelled at the three minors. Pehnos then allegedly slapped and pushed his 8-year-old stepson, and punched his 10-year-old stepdaughter's back and pulled her hair. Pehnos looked at the KHS staff and allegedly said, "I don't give a ***," as he walked away with the three minors. Witnesses at the scene immediately called for police assistance.

After meeting with the witnesses, police officers made their way to Pehnos' residence, where they noticed one of the minors had bruising on his face. The Division of Youth Services was called and a follow-up interview by police



was conducted at a later date. The DPS statement did not clarify why it took six months since the incident happened before Pehnos was arrested. (Saipan Tribune)

FIRST FRIDAY AT MARIANAS CREATIONS

Christmas spirit pushed at MC in joint event with Cristianos Saipan

The "First Friday" event series continues today, Dec. 6, from 6pm to 10pm at Marianas Creations, with Cristianos Saipan again joining as the culinary partner for the event.

"We're excited to be back in Garapan to support the monthly First Friday art celebration," said Cristianos Saipan owner Iszel Esteves.

Today, Cristianos Saipan will be featuring its new carntas rice bowl, in addition to its regular menu items.

The First Friday events showcase local art, and allow the community to meet some of the artists. New art is in stock just in time for the holidays, and many artists have made Christmas-themed items that are perfect for gifts.

"Every First Friday is a chance for the community to support our local artists," said Elina Gharti Chhetri, owner of Marianas Creations. "This month is extra special, as you can share your support by picking up a holiday gift for someone special. Every

CONTACT INFO

Elina Gharti Chhetri
■ 670-488-1924
■ 670-783-1924
■ sales@marianascreations.com

holiday purchase at Marianas Creations supports artists and producers right here at home, in the Marianas."

The "First Friday" concept is a popular event series hosted in cities around the world. Typically, the events focus on promoting local art and culture.

Marianas Creations is soliciting for artists interested in showcasing their work to contact the shop. Additionally, they are seeking anyone who produces local products to contact the shop.

Marianas Creations is located on Micro Beach Road next to Everest Kitchen and Bridge Capital LLC. They can be reached on Facebook, Instagram, by phone 488-1924, or email sales@marianascreations.com. (PR)

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Yumul still expects Lottery Commission response

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinares@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives Gaming Committee still expects a response from the CNMI Lottery Commission regarding the status of the Community Benefit Fund, which casino operator Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is supposed to pay into.

Committee chair Rep. Ralph Yumul (R-Saipan) told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview that he is still expecting a response from the CNMI Lottery Commission regarding the status of IPI's Community Benefit Fund payments.

"We should have an official response from them [the Lottery Commission] already, and I don't know what is taking so long. We are disappointed in them and this should have been a straight answer of who should be in charge of monitoring the Community Benefit Fund," Yumul said.

Yumul sent a letter dated Oct. 18, 2019 to both the Lottery Commission and the Commonwealth Casino Commission asking for a status update on the Community Benefit Fund, or the CBF.

The CBF is an annual contribution from IPI, with IPI supposed to chip in \$10 mil-

lion by Jan. 1, 2018, and another \$10 million by June 1, 2018. Subsequently, IPI would contribute \$20 million to the community chest every year on or before Oct. 1, 2019.

As of publication, only the CCC has responded to Yumul's letter.

"They [CCC] are pointing at another direction, so we are giving the Lottery Com-

mission an opportunity to respond," he said.

In a letter dated Nov. 26, 2019, the CCC wrote to the committee stating their inability to comment since the matter

is still "under investigation."

"Please be assured that upon completion of our investigation, we will update your committee on our findings and determinations," the CCC letter noted.

In his Oct. 18, 2019, letter, Yumul alleged that IPI only paid about \$3 million of the CBF payments for 2018. He noted that IPI potentially owes \$17 million in CBF payments based on "audited financial statements for the years ended Dec. 31, 2017, and Dec. 31, 2018."

Tinian mayor: Let's ensure equal access for everyone

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan is calling for equal access for everyone in the CNMI and that includes services for people with disabilities.

As keynote speaker during the celebration of the International Day of People with Disabilities last Wednesday at the CNMI Center for Living Independently building on Capital Hill, Aldan challenged government agencies and private entities to extend accommodations to provide services to everyone, especially to people with disabilities.

"As one Commonwealth, let us keep each other accountable for ensuring equal access to everyone in our communities," Aldan said.

The Tinian mayor is calling to ensure that the facilities and agencies in the Commonwealth are following the American Disability Act, for

all the elder community members and those who have disability to have access to all the opportunities provided to the public.

The ADA, which became law in 1990, prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Standards have been established requiring for the construction and alteration of facilities to be made more accessible to PWDs.

"When I was elected into office as mayor of Tinian in 2018, I vowed to carry out a vision that I had as a lawmaker to make accommodations a reality for our island community on Tinian," Aldan stressed.

"What began as making sure that all public, private, and government entities have updated disability parking spots that were specific and clear... had turned into renovating public places to make it accessible to everyone."

The mayor cited the Tinian fiesta grounds, which got

destroyed by Super Typhoon Yutu, as an example. As they rebuilt the fiesta grounds, their special projects team engineered a new design that allows for a ramp to the stage to make it accessible to those in wheelchairs and for those who walk with canes.

Not only did the new design put the project in compliance with ADA, but it demonstrated to people who use wheelchairs and canes on the island that they are included in everything that the Tinian government does, and sets the bar and provides an example for other agencies to follow.

Aldan also promised that all projects that his office would do will include accommodations for PWDs.

"I vow to all of you here today, that every single project that will be done on Tinian by the Tinian Mayor's Office will include accommodations for those with disability," Aldan



Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan calls for equal access for everyone during his keynote speech at the celebration of the International Day of People with Disabilities last Wednesday at the CNMI Center for Living Independently building on Capital Hill.

IVA MAURIN

and with impairment."

In the CNMI, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation leads in the provision of information and/or services for PWDs. For more information on these services, contact OVR at (670) 287-6609 or visit www.ovrgov.net.



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CHCC bolsters flu shot campaign

By MARC A. VENUS
marc_venus@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With the flu season now in full swing, the Commonwealth Health Care Corp. is bolstering its efforts to combat the flu virus and is urging all CNMI residents over 6 months old to get their annual flu vaccine, also called the "flu shot."

Sasamoto said Influenza B was the most common case of the flu last year. "We saw an uncommon pattern of the influenza B virus in patients last year," he said.

This form of influenza can only pass from human to human, and is equally severe to its counterpart, Influenza A. Influenza B is highly contagious and can have dangerous effects on a person's health in more severe cases; it can cause seasonal outbreaks and can be transferred throughout the year.

However, Influenza A is the most common form and can spread from animals to humans, and is known to cause pandemics.

It takes the body two weeks after getting the flu shot to have the right antibodies to fight off the flu virus. CHCC emphasizes getting the flu shot does not lead to getting the flu.

There are instances where flu shot patients have gotten the flu after receiving the shot, but those instances are still rarer than getting the actual flu infection. Even those people who are infected with the flu even after vaccination tend to not get

as sick as those who get the flu and are not vaccinated.

CHCC recommends that flu shots are not administered to infants under 6 months of age, who must rely on "herd immunity," meaning people around them must be vaccinated and healthy in order to protect the child. Getting vaccinated helps to prevent the spread of the flu to the very young and very ill who may not be able to get the flu shot, such as those undergoing chemotherapy for cancer.

All pregnant women, regardless of their trimester of pregnancy, are also encouraged to get a flu shot. A flu shot during pregnancy can help prevent the flu and its complications for both the mother and fetus, and protects the baby from the flu after birth.

Those requiring a flu shot you may visit:

- CHCC Outpatient Clinics on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota
- Kagman Community Health Center
- Marianas Medical Center
- Medical Associates of the Pacific
- Pacific Medical Center
- Saipan Health Center

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Fast legislative action seen on GHLI bill

The House of Representatives is expected to introduce and act as soon as possible on a bill that would adjust the fiscal year 2020 budget appropriations, despite it being already over two months into the fiscal year.

Rep. Ivan Blanco (R-Saipan) told *Saipan Tribune* Wednesday that he pre-filed a bill that would correct the Group Health and Life Insurance funding issue after Gov. Ralph DLG Torres vetoed Section 710(k) of the budget bill when he enacted it last September. That section mandated the Executive Branch to pay the GHLI premiums of Legislature

and Judiciary employees.

Separately, House Speaker Blas "B.J." Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview that the Legislature has to push the matter. "We've already got the numbers down...for both branches, so we are going to appropriate those funds to the respective branches to address their needs for employees," he said.

"It's something the Chief Justice [Alexandro Castro] brought up as a concern since October [2019] and we wanted to get accurate numbers, so we've done all the calculations for that and we will be acting on that so we

won't have to worry about it [in the future]," he added.

The speaker noted that the bill is needed to confirm that the payments are being made in order to avoid an interruption in services.

"This bill is simply correcting what we missed," Blanco told *Saipan Tribune* in a separate interview.

Attao noted that the bill would be introduced and immediately acted on in a future House session. He expects the House to support the legislation.

"...I'm sure that the members of the House [are] in full support of that and I believe the

members of the Legislature in general supports the intent because that was the understanding, that the GHLI was going to be taken care of under the independent programs," he said.

Blanco noted in a previous interview that the Executive Branch and the House Ways and Means Committee, which he chairs, had exchanged communications during the budget process for fiscal year 2020, indicating that the Executive Branch would be shouldering the GHLI payments of legislative and judicial employees for the fiscal year. However, at the signing of the fiscal year

2020 budget, Torres vetoed the section that specified that.

On Nov. 25, 2019, Torres' chief of staff, Angel Demapan, told *Saipan Tribune* that

the Torres administration is already working on a legislation that would clarify the payment of GHLI for fiscal year 2020. (Erwin Encinares)

Financial aid still available for NMC spring semester

Individuals interested in applying for Northern Marianas College's spring 2020 semester can still receive financial aid to help with tuition and other academic expenses. Prospective students are encouraged to attend NMC's upcoming information session to learn more about the Federal Financial Aid program, which uses the FAFSA.

The information session, which is open to all interested community members, will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 11, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at NMC's Olympio T. Borja Library.

The Federal Financial Aid program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Through the program's various types of grants, loans, and scholarships, the Federal Financial Aid program is the largest financial aid provider in the U.S.

NMC faculty, staff, and students from the different degree programs at NMC, as well as representatives from financial aid, counseling, and admissions offices will be on hand at the info session to answer questions. Additional topics that will be discussed include the different degree programs offered at the college and other college initiatives.

Attendees of the information session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for Northern Marianas College's upcoming spring 2020 semester, a savings of about \$75.

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, emailoar@marianas.edu, or visit www.marianas.edu. (NMC)



CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

The Northern Marianas College and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. have paired up to bring their joy-themed booth to life for the 2019 Christmas Village display at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. The lighting ceremony for the Christmas Village will take place on Dec. 6 at 6:30pm. Judging and voting of the booths happen on opening night only.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director



EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-20-004

FINANCIAL AND COMPLIANCE AUDIT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2019, 2020 & 2021

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for services of a U.S. Certified Public Accounting Firm/Individual with knowledge, skill, and experience in auditing (1) financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards of the U.S. and; (2) federal awards programs in accordance with the Single Audit Act and U.S. Office of Management and Budget requisites

- Provide assistance to the CUC management with the preparation of the annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America
- Ensure that the financial statements and auditor's reports also meet any specific requirements contained in agreements or other contractual requirements relative to financial statement presentation and the audits.
- Submit the draft financial statements and accompanying auditor's reports to CUC management no later than January 31st of each year, and issue the final reports no later than February 28th of each year.
- Provide 15 bound copies of the final financial statements and accompanying auditor's report
- Provide an electronic copy (e.g., .pdf format) of the final report to the CUC.

Auditors are responsible to review the 2019, 2020 & 2021 financial statements to include the physical CUC assets for each fiscal year.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set. The \$100 package fee will be waived for firms that had previously registered and paid for a CUC-RFP-19-037 package.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Proposal & One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate sealed envelopes marked "CUC-RFP-20-004, Financial and Compliance Audit for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2019, 2020 & 2021" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **December 23, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional RFP will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 10, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Greg Cruz, CUC Chief Financial Officer, via email address greg.cruz@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



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Janice E. Castro
Director, DCRM

PUBLIC NOTICE

MEETING OF THE CRM AGENCY OFFICIALS

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios through the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) hereby give notice that a CRM Agency Officials meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 10, 2019, 9:30AM** at the DCRM 3rd Floor Conference Room, in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Adoption of Agenda
- D. Adoption of November 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes

II. PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW

- A. CRM Permit Application No. TMS-2019-X-020

Project: XINGSHA HOTEL PROJECT The Tinian Hairui Real Estate Co., LLC is proposing to construct the Xingsha Hotel along 8th Avenue and Kammer Beach, Lot No. 040 T 06, in San Jose, Tinian. The proposed project consists of two 3-story building complex with a total of 92 guest rooms, 112 parking spaces, storage area, control room, lobby and reception area, snack bar, and kitchen and dining areas with seating of about 40 persons. The proposal includes landscaping of plants and trees and an offsite sewer treatment facility. The proposed offsite sewer treatment facility will be situated on Lot No. 045 T 10, in San Jose, Tinian.

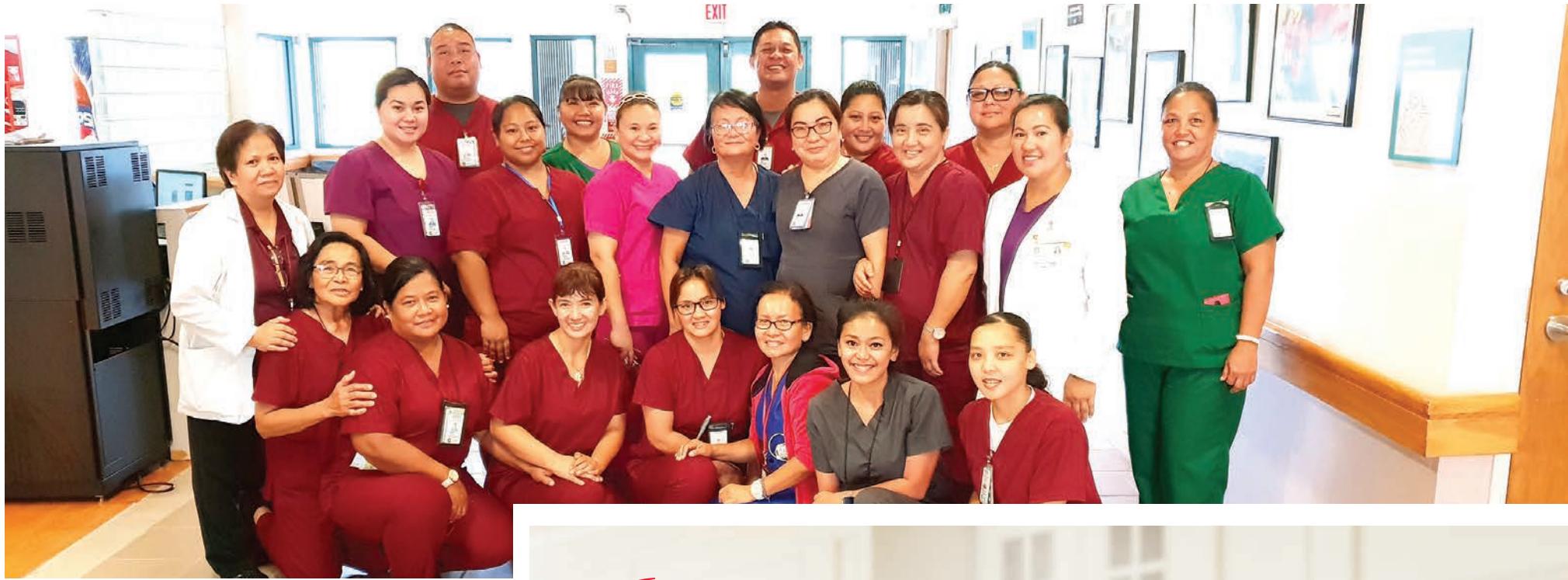
- 1) Agencies' Discussion of the Sewer System and Treatment Plant
- 2) Agencies' Permit Conditions
- 3) CRM Permit Application Final Determination

III. OTHER MATTERS

IV. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony regarding the above agenda items. (NOTE: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session).

/s/ JANICE E. CASTRO
Director, DCRM



Eighteen caregivers employed with Catholic Social Service and Health Services of the Pacific became certified nursing assistants last month after a three-month apprenticeship program through University of Guam and the Guam Department of Labor.

UNIVERSITY OF GUAM

18 caregivers become certified nursing assistants

Guam now has 18 more certified nursing assistants, or CNAs, following a three-month apprenticeship program provided by the University of Guam and the Guam Department of Labor. The CNAs are employees of Catholic Social Service and Health Services of the Pacific, where they worked as caregivers prior to starting the Nursing Assistant Education Program in June.

"We are thrilled to announce that the class had a 100% pass rate, which we attribute to the strong partnership among our faculty and staff, the Guam Department of Labor, and the employers," Hattori-Uchima said. "These 18 CNAs will now return to their employers with enhanced skills they can begin using right away in caring for patients."

The program reached a less common segment of the population when it comes to nursing education—with the average age of the class being 43 and nearly half being Pacific Islanders of CHamoru or Micronesian descent.

The training program was funded through the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant, a \$1.7-million grant to increase registered apprentices in Guam by 300 workers within allied health, telecommunications, construction, and hospitality. The funding covered the students' tuition, uniforms, books, clearances, and physical exams to be part of the program.

"We look forward to working with more community partners to implement additional programs similar to the CNA Registered Apprenticeship program that help develop our workforce," Dell'Isola said. (UOG)

then pass both a written and skills exam. The apprentices received 160 hours of training after work and on weekends and were then certified by the Guam Board of Nurse Examiners after passing the national certification exam.

"Through this cohort, we have increased the number of CNAs on island, and we are glad to have helped identify a solution that addresses the certification needs and up-skilling for allied health professionals," said David Dell'Isola, director of the Guam Department of Labor.

CNAs work under the supervision of a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse preparing rooms and supplies, assisting with tests and procedures, and directly assisting patients. CNAs, unlike caregivers, must undergo a set number of classroom and clinical training hours and

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

He killed Trayvon Martin, now George Zimmerman is suing—everyone. Why?

George Zimmerman burst back into the news on Wednesday, just in time for the holiday season.

You remember Zimmerman? He was acquitted in the 2013 fatal shooting of unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin—a case that rocked Florida.

The former neighborhood watch volunteer now blames everyone involved in his prosecution—and he wants money—\$100 million, to be exact.

Zimmerman is back. He is now suing/blaming Martin's parents, prosecutors and witnesses who played a role in his case. He claims the prosecution was built on evidence and a timeline provided by a friend of the teen who was on the phone with him when Zimmerman approached Martin, walking to his father's apartment at the Sanford development.

Martin was walking back from a convenience store through the development, where Zimmerman also lived. He looked suspicious to Zimmerman, who approached the teen. A struggle ensued and the teen was fatally wounded. Zimmerman's attorney used the stand your ground defense in the case, which went to trial in 2013.

Now, Zimmerman and his new attorney, Larry Klayman, founder of Judicial Watch, cite as basis of their Polk County suit the information in a documentary about the case titled "The Trayvon Hoax." It accuses the Martin family of engineering false testimony. The director has scheduled a press conference this week in Coral Gables, Fla., to coincide with a film screening there. That screening has now been canceled.

Setting aside the arrogance, irony and the merits of the case aside, we have one wish for Zimmerman, who turned into a bad penny since this tragedy occurred. He seems to get arrested every couple of years, bouncing back onto the headlines—like he just did.

Martin's parents have started a foundation in his name, written a book in tribute of their son and his mother, Sybrina Fulton, is running for Miami-Dade commissioner. Meanwhile, Zimmerman has been arrested for domestic violence, a gun scuffle in a road rage incidents and also stalking.

And now Zimmerman wants to go back to court, this time for money.

All Floridians should rue the day that Trayvon Martin encountered this troubled and tortured man.

We have one wish for Zimmerman: Please, leave us alone.

(c)2019 Miami Herald



Skymark has landed

The takeaway is that we need to help Skymark help us help them. This new era of Japanese tourism to the Northern Marianas depends on a mutually beneficial relationship. Skymark can't fly unless we keep their customers happy, satisfied, and feeling as if they got their money's worth out of their vacation to paradise. We can't keep our economy together without a vibrant source-country diversified tourism industry. We allow ourselves to rely on only two major volume source markets at our peril. Sooner or later, that will break and leave us stranded. We need three or more major source markets to safely and profitably navigate our economy through the turbulent air of a delicately balanced industry like tourism.

We need Japan. Skymark needs a profitable offshore route. We need to help them keep those planes full with top quality promotional programs from MVA. We need to make sure our product—Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—are as good as we can possibly make them. Working together, everyone wins. "Tourism is everybody's business" was never truer than during this early period of direct flights from Tokyo/Narita once again. We can do it. We must do it. I have to help, however I can. You need to help, however you can. Think about it and please do whatever you can to help.

One last point. Skymark has said they are interested in bringing in charter flights from outlying second and third-tier cities in Japan to Saipan. This is a very important source of new clientele for us. Much work has been done by MVA to promote our islands to the visitors from Osaka and Nagoya, but they had no flight to get here anymore. Now they will have those flights on a charter basis. Third-tier cities like Sendai, Niigata, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Sapporo, etc. offer fresh new possibilities to expose the friendly folk of Japan to our natural wonders here on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Let's help Skymark bring in those charters.

Yes to B&B's, no moratorium

It was heartening to see a voice of reason speaking out in the form of Ms. Tracy B. Norita, Revenue and Taxation director for the CNMI, part of whose job it is to oversee and maximize income sources due the government. In her professional opinion, it would be a mistake to leave the money on the table that new B&B businesses will bring into the treasury of the CNMI if they are forbidden to even apply to start their new businesses. I agree and would add that those type of businesses provide a much-needed service to our tourism industry by providing alternative short-term accommodations to some of our tourists looking for that kind of vacation experience.

By BRUCE BATEMAN

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Bruce A. Bateman resides on Saipan with a wife, a son, and an unknown number of boondie dogs. He has owned and operated a number of unusual businesses and most recently worked as the marketing manager for MVA. Bruce likes to read, travel, tinker with bicycles, hike, swim, and play a bit of golf. He is opinionated and writes when the mood strikes.

In her testimony to the House of Representatives on the matter, she added that not only was the moratorium on licensing new B&Bs a bad idea but that the proposal to stop new businesses from applying for three long years was not something done by any other taxing jurisdiction.

Her key point in opposing Lee Pan's H.L.B. 21-32 was that the bill would stop legitimate new businesses from starting up but does essentially nothing to solve the problem that Leepan cited for introducing the legislation in the first place. That some B&Bs currently providing the service are not properly taxed or licensed by the government. She is absolutely right—if we are not collecting the hotel occupancy tax correctly from some businesses that needs to be addressed immediately by the appropriate agencies: Commerce for licensing and Finance enforcement for the taxes. By P.L. 18-1 the Department of Finance gets hundreds of thousands of dollars annually from the HOT to enforce that taxes' proper payment. So enforce it already.

If 20% of B&Bs are not paying their tax or are not properly licensed, simply ferret them out and force them into compliance, along with the other 80% doing it right. This is not rocket science. Some googling to see who is advertising, some sleuthing to find the others, the purchase of a few padlocks to immediately shut down any unlicensed business (including locally owned "apartments") not paying their tax. If a business offers to rent rooms to the public by the month or by the year, it is an apartment. If they offer such rooms by the day or the week they are a hotel and should be paying the tax. Simple. So simple in fact that I hereby offer to subcontract this simple job of finding offenders for a measly 15% of what new income I can bring in to the CNMI coffers. What a nice guy. Email me for details.

Seriously, there is money to be made. Enforcement procedures need to be put into place that will produce results right away.

See SKYMARK on Page 13

Perennial as the grass

Budgetary shortfall is no longer news for it seems as perennial as the grass. It goes up or down depending on economic activities.

Business activities (investment) warrant a bit more focus and attention to stir and expand revenue generation. If done right we should meet obligations with fund sufficiency.

It's an opportunity to raise the poverty income of nearly 15-thousand employees. In other words, healthy investment spurs more income and higher paying jobs. As it is most employees are quizzing what tomorrow would bring. Any hope of improving their income or "not yet, already?"

Understood the inadvertent imposition of obligations overrunning revenue generation. Hope it isn't a reason to attempt sneaking additional taxes against hard hit taxpayers literally struggling with poverty income levels today.

Nonetheless, we're equipped with foresight to see in advance what happens when ill fated decisions on spending are allowed. We have the opportunity now to do it right. If sacrifice is in order let's do it in the interest of timely delivery of services.

Meanwhile, though we may be poised with investments we shouldn't be complacent with it given the persistent increase in the cost of obligations here. There's no room for complacency!

In fact, we should emulate what other cities across the country are doing by directly helping ongoing businesses improve upon current investments. This expands services while

increasing revenue generation concurrently. It's happening across the fruited plain.

Rework!

It seems, however, we've taken a slide into the usual "mañana" on investments for one reason or another. Must not be precipitous or negligent on this score. It's a matter of improving and sustaining the quality of life at home. And it's good to keep it up while we're ahead.

Moreover, our savings grace has been and still is the nature of tiny pearly isles in the cultural tradition of sharing. We use it generously especially when someone needs help.

On a personal basis, I'd extend help to anyone in need without a blink. The sense of satisfaction can never be explained seeing that my fellow man makes it through another day. Generous sharing is part and whole of the island culture.

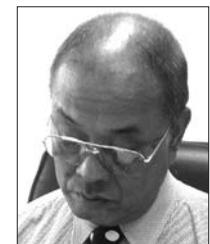
Quietly

Being musically inclined, I usually have soft music while I read or write. It helps set the stage for the thought process. I prefer soft and melodic instrumental music from piano and guitar.

While at it, the melodic tune Whispering Hope playing in my laptop would slide in every so often. I'd listen and hum while reading. It's a tune that revives my sense of hope no matter how spent intellectual acuity may be. A certain part says, "wait for the

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.



sunshine tomorrow after the shower is done".

Yes, after the rhythm of the rain fades comes fresh morning air that revives and resets my buttons. It's a new day and ready for whatever it brings. I suppose hope whispers as I sip my first cup of coffee at dawn looking forward to another bright day in paradise.

Plague

While mindful of events at home, I also have my eyes of the plague in China. Hope it is brought under control so it doesn't turn pandemic on a global basis. About four cases have been found where all four people have died, recently. ***

National dems inquisition into presidential impeachment raises the vital query: is it a search for justice? Indeed, it included legal eagles from prestigious law firms and professors of law. I find their succinct explanations a real learning experience how the best legal minds view constitutional issues.

Reality

It would be interesting to hear answers from the elected elite on queries relating to improving the quality of life of villagers in their precincts.

Most would defer to the economy, an interesting concept though hardly understood by Da Boysis. Puzzling the courage to use it as the single word covers all misperception. How about revisiting reality check at least intermittently?

The law!

The concept of "ascendancy of laws" simply shows what laws reign supreme over others. Constitutional law is supreme over statutory laws (those approved by the legislature).

I raise the issue in light of plans by Rep. Roman Benavente to transfer disposition of public lands from DPL to DNLR. No sir! Statutory law is inferior to constitutional law.

Moreover, there's a strong history behind the assignment of public lands to DPL. Imagine if it were under whimsical legislative disposition from half-cocked policymakers. *Fandango!*

No sir! Benavente must review the supremacy of laws concept to do justice to current disposition of public land. The issue entailed an involved discussion in the first constitutional convention. Review it for your own purpose and benefit, sir!

SKYMARK

From Page 12

There is just no excuse for not enforcing the law. The slackers hurt our income but not as bad as putting a moratorium in place that chokes the very business we are relying on out of business before they even start.

I oppose any B&B moratorium, as should any thinking person. Cure the real problem—poor enforcement. Don't worry with nostrum powder to calm the itch when, with less effort, we can cure the sore that causes the itch. Crank up a massive positive cash flow engine by finding, identifying, and charging current and future taxes to all such establishments plus a nice hefty fine for past transgressions, payable along with their new monthly HOT tax in small installments so they can stay in business and provide our government with the money it needs and our tourists with a place to stay.

■ ■ ■

Thanks for reading Sour Grapes!

■ ■ ■

"A fine is a tax for doing something wrong. A tax in a fine for doing something right."

—Malcolm St. Pier

"Worried about an IRS audit? Avoid what's called a red flag. That's something the IRS always looks for. For example, say you have some money left in your bank account after paying your taxes. That's a red flag."

—Jay Leno

Nancy Pelosi was right to be cautious of impeachment, and to proceed with inquiry

Nancy Pelosi was right—both times. And that's the Democrats' problem.

The House speaker had it right when she repeatedly said for most of the past year that impeaching President Donald Trump would be politically unwise without the prospect of some support from Republicans.

"Impeachment is so divisive to the country that unless there's something so compelling and overwhelming and bipartisan, I don't think we should go down that path, because it divides the country," she told *The Washington Post* last March.

But she was also right when she later decided Trump's effort to withhold military aid and an Oval Office visit from Ukraine's new president to force him to investigate potential 2020 rival Joe Biden required a full-scale House impeachment inquiry.

"We could not ignore what the president did," she said on CBS' "60 Minutes." "He gave us no choice."

Despite Republican tactics aimed more at disruption than defense, the House Intelligence Committee has now produced a report detailing what Trump did and why from a series of witnesses who were either nonpartisan career government employees or Trump nominees.

But as the House Judiciary Committee prepares to write and approve the actual articles of impeachment, both Pelosi's initial concerns and her decision to proceed remain valid.

An array of polls shows the country split along partisan lines on the need to impeach and convict Trump. The hearings appear to have produced little change in the balance that also shows a roughly even division among the independents who could decide next year's election.

The likelihood of Senate conviction seems no greater than at the start of the process, since not one of the 53-member Republican majority has shown any sign of voting to convict Trump, though a handful have criticized him or remained intriguingly silent.

Still, the Intelligence Committee's Democratic majority strongly indicted Trump, declaring he deliberately "solicited the interference of a foreign Government, Ukraine, to benefit his re-election," something that, for a normal citizen, would constitute a potentially indictable criminal offense.

In recent weeks, Pelosi and other top Democrats have used the word "bribery" to describe how Trump held up congressionally approved funds for Ukraine until it agreed to take steps that could help his reelection prospects.

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), the Intelligence Committee chairman, said Tuesday he thought that was "what the founders had in mind when they used that word in the Constitution," referring to the provision listing "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors" as the offenses warranting impeachment.

Another reason: according to *The Washington Post*, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee found that focus group participants in swing districts considered "bribery" a better description for Trump's conduct than "quid pro

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF

The Dallas Morning News

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him via email at carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com.



quo" or "extortion."

Of course, Ukraine is not the only problematic area for the president.

Until Pelosi and the rest of the Democratic leadership decided that his Ukraine acts crossed the impeachment line, various House committees had been studying other questionable presidential acts.

For example, the Judiciary Committee, which will draft the articles against Trump, reportedly has been looking into not only what the Intelligence Committee called "categorical and unprecedented obstruction" of the Ukraine probe, but prior examples cited by Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on the 2016 Trump campaign; potential campaign finance violations stemming from the pre-election 2016 payments to two women alleging sexual affairs with Trump; and alleged violation of the Constitution's so-called "emoluments" provision barring a president from benefiting financially from his presidency.

Some inside and outside government have urged the House to broaden any impeachment charges.

Kenneth Foard McCallion, a former federal prosecutor and author of a new book highly critical of Trump, contended on the Morning Consult website that the House "has an obligation to include within the scope of its impeachment inquiry whether Trump has committed treason by providing aid and comfort to Russia, to the severe detriment to fundamental U.S. interests."

Repeated acts favoring Vladimir Putin's Russia infect many of Trump's foreign policy decisions beyond Ukraine. But there are two reasons for Democrats to confine charges to the narrower case involving the former Soviet republic.

First, it would stress the clear-cut allegation Trump misused presidential power in his own interest, rather than the country's. Second, and most unfortunately, the Democrats are operating within time constraints, given the onset of the 2020 election campaign.

In the coming weeks, the House will likely vote to make Trump the third president to be impeached. Early next year, the Senate will likely reject the charges, making him the third president to be acquitted.

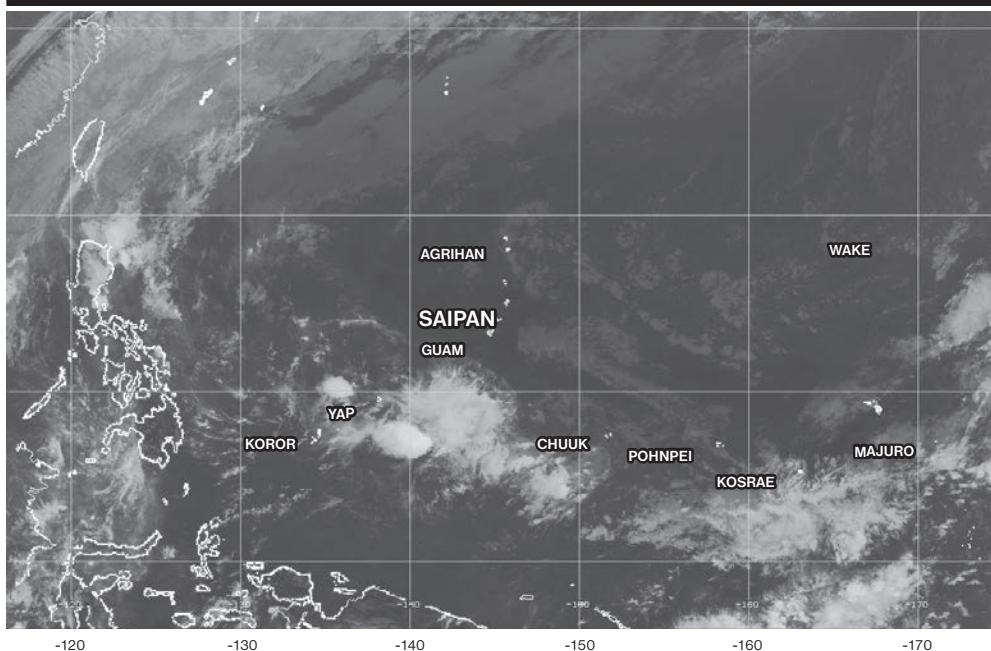
Though Trump would then claim vindication, impeachment would stand as a permanent stain on his presidential record. Then, it will be up to the voters to render the ultimate judgment in November.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
89°	77°	87°	76°	88°
77°	77°	88°	77°	86°
76°	88°	77°	77°	76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:47 AM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2019

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas waters, mainly near Guam. The VAD wind profile indicates east-northeast winds of 15 to 20 knots through the 8 thousand feet of the air. The buoys reveal a substantial east-northeast trade-wind swell and a small west swell leftover from former Typhoon Kammuri, with combined seas of 5 to 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86°	/	79°
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	86°	/	78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86°	/	79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	85°	/	79°
Pohnpei	Sunny	86°	/	77°
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	86°	/	77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86°	/	81°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲	▼	°F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	75°	/	64°
Beijing	Sunny	43°	/	19°
Hong Kong	Sunny	70°	/	54°
Honolulu	Showers	80°	/	72°
London	Showers	55°	/	43°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	67°	/	53°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88°	/	75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	68°	/	50°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78°	/	63°
New York	Partly Cloudy	47°	/	29°
Osaka	Cloudy	48°	/	41°
Paris	Rain	45°	/	45°
Busan	Sunny	48°	/	34°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	61°	/	50°
Salem	Showers	60°	/	44°
San Francisco	Rain	59°	/	53°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	43°	/	19°
Tokyo	Showers	43°	/	37°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	53°	/	31°



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
2:48 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.05
8:51 AM	LOW TIDE	0.41
3:50 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.61
10:45 PM	LOW TIDE	0.50

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:29 AM	5:45 PM
Saturday	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Sunday	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Monday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Tuesday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:13 AM	1:45 PM
Saturday	-	2:00 AM	2:20 PM
Sunday	-	2:47 AM	2:57 PM
Monday	-	3:35 AM	3:36 PM
Tuesday	-	4:25 AM	4:17 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 2, 2019

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117 9:15am 9:55am Daily				UA174 7:30am 8:11am Daily			
UA105 6:20pm 7:00pm 2, 4, 6				UA104 4:45pm 5:26pm 2, 4, 6			
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
SKY811 10:15am 3:00pm Daily				SKY816 4:35pm 7:30pm 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7			
				SKY816 5:05pm 8:00pm 6			
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451 3:20am 6:30am Daily				7C3452 9:35pm 2:30am+1 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7			
				7C3452 10:05pm 2:30am+1 3			
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
TW308 2:05am 6:05am Daily				OZ6233 8:00am 1:20pm 2, 4, 6			
OZ626 2:10am 6:05am 1				OZ623 8:55am 2:30pm 1, 3, 5, 7			
OZ626 2:50am 6:25am 3, 7				7C3402 10:10am 3:30pm Daily			
OZ626 2:50am 6:40am 2, 4, 5, 6				TW309 11:10am 4:25pm Daily			
7C3403 4:35am 8:35am Daily				OZ625 7:30pm 1:00am+1 7			
OZ6243 3:20pm 7:10pm 2, 4, 6				TW307 7:45pm 1:05am+1 Daily			
OZ624 3:50pm 7:40pm 1, 3, 5, 7				OZ625 8:20pm 1:40am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6			
7C3401 4:30pm 8:25pm Daily				7C3404 10:10pm 3:40am+1 Daily			
TW310 5:25pm 10:15pm Daily							
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648 6:10am 8:50am 4, 7							



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CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM SPELLING BEE

DECEMBER 7, 2019 AT 8:00 AM • FIESTA RESORT & SPA

For more information contact the English Language Arts Program
of the Office of Curriculum & Instruction at (670) 322-3506.



Maria Enriquez
2nd Grade



Chelsea Sonoda
5th Grade



Ana Villagomez
5th Grade



Guadalupe Villagomez
4th Grade



Preicouz Lontoc
4th Grade



Kyomi Taisakan
5th Grade



Jillian Espelarga
4th Grade



Daisylyn Camacho
4th Grade



Joshua Taisakan
4th Grade



Nicole Pacala
4th Grade



Mary Joy Viloria
4th Grade



Juris Cabarles
5th Grade



Jenard Nuyda
5th Grade



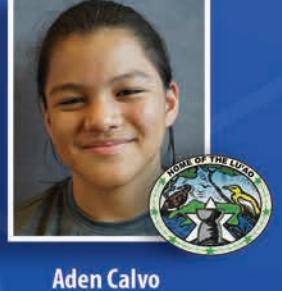
Aron Blancia
5th Grade



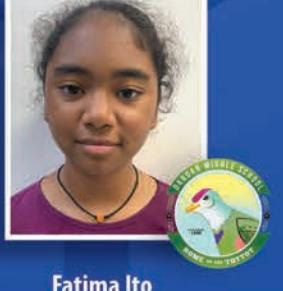
Alyanna Rotap
5th Grade



Lovelee Jingco
6th Grade



Aden Calvo
6th Grade



Fatima Ito
8th Grade



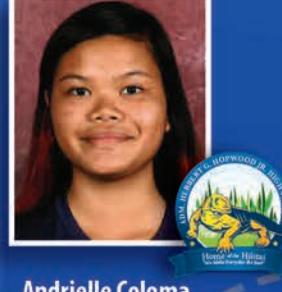
Jazabelle Sumor
7th Grade



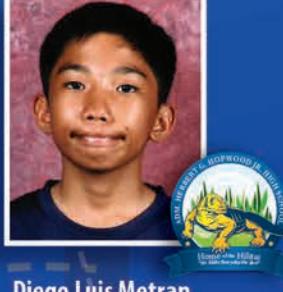
Angeline Laxamana
8th Grade



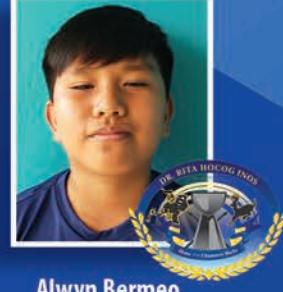
Shyleen Santos
6th Grade



Andrielle Coloma
8th Grade



Diego Luis Metran
7th Grade



Alwyn Bermeo
8th Grade



Ashley Cayabyab
7th Grade



Elizabeth Babauta
7th Grade



Soomaitah Ferdous
8th Grade



Endymion San Nicolas
7th Grade



Kelvin Shrestha
8th Grade



STUDENTS FIRST



Message from the Executive Director

Greetings and Happy Holidays to the people of the CNMI. As we prepare to welcome the new year, I wanted to share some museum updates. Fiscal year 2019, has been very challenging given the devastation that Super Typhoon Yutu brought to the CNMI in 2018.

Fortunately, the museum only sustained minor damages. The NMI Museum continues to be leak and flood free, despite the major typhoons and heavy rains we received. Former Speaker Ralph Demapan and I are working closely, trying to secure additional funding to address the critical shortage of storage capacity and the completion of other essential projects.

Budget cuts, delayed vendor payments have made our operations very difficult. Many vendors who used to provide services, want payment before engaging in other projects. Other businesses, no longer accept government purchase orders and instead want full payment before services are performed or goods delivered.

The NMI Museum is an independent program from the Office of the Governor. The museum is in a unique situation because it serves as a major tourist attraction site, it is the official Commonwealth repository of historical and cultural materials and its building (Old Japanese Hospital) is a historical site.

Given the lack of budget for maintenance of the 93-year-old building, we are truly blessed that some businesses are able to recognize our importance to tourism and offer contributions.

Governor Torres and Lt. Governor Palacios, personally visited the museum and have been very supportive of our program by addressing our immediate needs and acknowledging our role in preservation and education of our proud, historic Chamorro and Carolinian culture.

The legislature and the Marianas Visitors Authority have also played major roles in the repairs and transformation of our only CNMI government owned museum. I'm pleased with Secretary of Finance Dave Atalig, Finance Director for Administrative Services Bert Torres, CNMI Treasurer Connie Agluto and Customs Director Jose Mafnas who have also expressed their support to assist the museum.

The museums success is incumbent on the acceptance of the business community, tour groups, government agencies, legislature, Senators but most especially to our residents, to please visit the museum.

The success of the NMI Museum relies on two factors, public participation through visits and lastly, our willingness to accept that we all play significant roles in its success by simply sacrificing a can of soda, green tea and using that money to voluntarily donate to the museum or lobbying our leaders for sustainable funding to achieve success.

Daniel Aquino



TOUR COMPANIES

Northern Marianas College offers history class (one segment) as part of the tour guide certification program in the NMI Museum. It's very disappointing that tour companies who send their employees thru the certification program are never seen again.

Even more troubling, is when busses packed with Japanese tourists visit the Sugar King Park but skip the museum located in the Old Japanese Hospital. The Old Japanese Hospital, Japanese Laboratory and the 2 Japanese water tanks were built pre-war era and survived World War II.

There has been past communications with these tour groups who have also brought representatives to check on the state and museums visual appearance in order to bring Japanese tourists but so far, Sugar King Park has been one of the beneficiaries that tour operators have been utilizing.



NMI MUSEUM HOSTS THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Secretary of Finance David Atalig, conducted his staff meeting at the NMI Museum's recently repaired and renovated, Old Japanese Laboratory building.

The meeting gave us the opportunity to have a dialogue with the Secretary and the Department of Finance to discuss the difficulties, challenges and problems that we are experiencing as a result of budget cuts, late vendor payments that hamper and jeopardize services from being canceled.

Having the Secretary of Finance and his leadership team and staff visit the museum to hear our concerns was a morale booster.

After a brief presentation, the Department of Finance was given a tour, shown before and after photos of the museum and witnessed the high level of attention, cleanliness, maintenance and

care, the 93- year old building, its exhibits and artifacts receives.

Given the minimal financial resources the museum receives, I am humbled, and very proud of my team and salute each of them for the hard work they perform. Kudos and many thanks to the Secretary of Finance and Finance Director for Administrative Services Bert Torres for coordinating and organizing their meeting at the NMI Museum.

Special thanks to the Finance Treasurer, Connie Agluto, Customs Director Jose Mafnas, and the entire Department of Finance for participating and attending this productive dialogue.

I encourage other departments to think outside the box and have their meetings at the museum so they can also be able to tour our facility.



First Lady Diann Torres & Second Lady Wella Palacios PRESENTS 2019 Christmas Village



Friday, December 6, 2019 | Multi-Purpose Center Courtyard | @ 6:30PM



Judging and voting on opening night



FIRST LADY DIANNE TORRES AND SECOND LADY WELLA PALACIOS-CHRISTMAS VILLAGE

The NMI Museum partnered with the Saipan Mayor's Office, with their presentation of the 2019 Lego and Mine Craft Christmas home. The NMI Museum is pleased to team up with the Mayor's Office to officially welcoming the start of the holiday season.

Congratulations, to First Lady Dianne and Second Lady Wella, for putting this event together, good luck to all the hard working departments and businesses participating in the Christmas house contest.

Please join us this Friday, December 6, 2019, 6pm at the Multi-Purpose Center for the traditional Christmas tree lighting and unveiling of the Christmas village.

First Lady Dianne and Second Lady Wella wanted to have something special for the children Friday evening, so with their special request, the NMI Museum train will be making the long journey from Garapan to the Multi-Purpose giving free train rides.



THE NMI MUSEUM IS OPEN:

Monday to Friday:
Saturday:

9am to 4pm
10am to 4pm



Lee: It's time to report and study crimes regionally

Sen. Régine Biscoe Lee has secured a regional commitment to report and share data about crimes committed against children, women, and the elderly across the Pacific.

The Democrat lawmaker is on Saipan this week as part of Guam's delegation to the 60th general membership meeting of the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures. Lee serves as a member of the regional organization's board of directors for the 2018-2019 term.

As part of this year's proceedings, Lee introduced a resolution that commits APIL members to "unifying efforts to curb the victimization of vulnerable populations, by establishing and committing to regional reporting of crimes committed against children, women, and the elderly." The measure is co-sponsored by the delegations from Chuuk, the CNMI, Kiribati, and Ha-

» Guam lawmaker introduces resolution on shared safety concerns at APIL

waii. It was unanimously adopted by the APIL yesterday. "Across the Pacific, cultures share values that revere the elderly, honor women, and protect children. Unfortunately, throughout our region too many nations and territories see violence and exploitation perpetrated against these important members of our island families," the resolution reads, in part. "Efforts to understand, prevent, and punish these crimes can be made more effective if communities tied by common cultural threads collect and share comparable data."

Regional stakeholders

have noted gaps in reporting gender-based and other biased crimes as recently as this year's United Nations Development Programme's Pacific Women Leadership Summit, which Lee attended.

"These despicable crimes steal the innocence of our youth, instill fear in our mothers, and violate the trust of our



Lee

wisest familial leaders. I'm thankful that the members of APIL agree that by coming together, we can make a difference," Lee said. "These opportunities to learn from one another, and commit to solving problems across the Pacific with solutions from within our region, is the best way forward. This is the first step to better researching and curbing these violent acts."

The resolution provides that APIL members will establish, by local statute or otherwise, at least an annual report of crimes

perpetrated against children, women, and the elderly. These reports will include important information like:

- The total number and demographic information of victims (including age, gender, ethnicity, etc.);
- The total number and demographic information of convicted abusers (including age, gender, relationship to victim, number of convictions, etc.);
- Information about crime perpetrated (clarifying violence, criminal sexual conduct, financial exploitation, etc.);
- Information regarding the resolution of criminal cases (verdict reached, plea deal negotiated, dismissal of case, etc.);
- Current penalties for crimes committed against children, women, and the elderly; and
- Any newly adopted or enacted rules, regulations, or statutes addressing crimes committed against children, women, and the elderly.

Once compiled and published, APIL member jurisdictions will transmit their reports to the association's secretariat,

who will then post all data to the APIL website for the free use of regional researchers and legislators.

Lee also authored a resolu-

tion that continues the Micronesia Challenge, a successful regional cleanup program. This measure also was adopted unanimously. (PR)

FSM Postal Service to deliver gifts to remote islands

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—This coming Dec. 10, 2019, the Postal Service of the Federated States of Micronesia will, in partnership with Okeanos Foundation for the Sea and their vaka motu canoes, sail from Pohnpei proper to the islands of Sapwuahfik, Nukuoro, and Kapingamarangi to deliver Christmas packages.

Only Christmas packages will be accepted for this special Christmas service to the remote islands; bulky items, such as housing materials, and flammable materials, will not be able to be sent on the vaka motus.

Citizens desiring a similar service in Chuuk State are encouraged to advocate for Chuuk State's acquisition of one or more vaka motu canoes.

For more information, the FSM Postal Service can be contacted at:

- Pohnpei: +691-320-2614
- Yap: +691-350-2197
- Kosrae: +691-370-2057
- Chuuk: +691-330-2737 (PR)

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP20-CHCC/DPH-MCHB-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 06, 2019 TIME: 10:00 AM

"NEEDS ASSESSMENT"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **RFP'S** TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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*/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER*

*/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S*

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP20-CHCC/RESPIRATORY CARE-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 20, 2019 TIME: 10:00 AM

"FOUR (4) PURITAN BENNETT 980 VENTILATORS & FISHER & PAYKEL 850 HUMIDIFIER BASE & STARTER KIT"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **RFP'S** TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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*/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER*

*/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S*

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB20-DPW/EN-021

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 06, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"LEASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "F" VEHICLE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, ENERGY DIVISION"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIA SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

*/S/ THELMA B. INOS
DIRECTOR OF DPW/ENERGY*

*/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S*

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>
Tels: (670) 234-6866, 234-9447, 234-7689, 234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE
(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds)
December 6, 2019

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt Arnold I. Palacios, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Acting Chairman, Mr. Kimo M. Rosario, wish to announce that its Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) for Program Year 2018 is available for review. Comments made by the general public should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on December 23, 2019. Written comments must be submitted to the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by contacting Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director, at 234-9447/7689.

The report will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Honolulu Office, by December 31, 2019. The CAPER encompasses the performance assessment of all HUD-funded programs, administered by the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

The report is available at the NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays. Individuals needing special accommodations to review and comment on the plan must contact the Planning Division for arrangements by calling (670) 234-7689/6866 during regular business hours.

Kimo M. Rosario
Acting Chairman of the Board

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Rota Field Office: Tel. (670) 532-9410
Fax: (670) 532-9441

Tinian Field Office: Tel. (671) 433-9213
Fax: (670) 433-3690

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Regular General Membership Meeting

When: Wednesday, December 11, 2019
Time: 8:00am-11:00am
Location: NMC Board of Regents Conference Room

AGENDA

I. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum
II. Review and Adoption of Agenda
III. Review and Adoption of Minutes
a. April 29, 2019 meeting
IV. Public Comments (5 Minutes per Commenter)
V. New Business
a. Update on DOL-WIA Activities
b. Upcoming 2020-2023 WIOA Unified State Plan
c. 2020 Meeting Schedule
i. Thursday, January 2, 2020
ii. Wednesday, February 19, 2020
iii. Wednesday, April, 01, 2020
iv. Wednesday, June 03, 2020
v. Wednesday, September 02, 2020
vi. Wednesday, December 02, 2020
VI. Executive Session
VII. Announcements
VIII. Next Meeting
a. Thursday, January 2, 2020
X. Adjournment

Approved by:
*/s/ Josephine DLG. Mesta
Chair, SWDB*

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Civil Action
IN THE MATTER) No. 19-0359-CV
OF THE ESTATE)
JULIANA) PETITION FOR
ROMOLOR ILO,) ADMINISTRATION
Deceased.) and NOTICE
TO: ALL HEIRS, DEVISEES, LEGATEES AND CREDITORS OF: JULIANAROMOLOR ILO, DECEASED
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the co-petition of JESUS P. TAITANO and AUGUSTIN L. TAITANO for the issuance of letters of administration of this estate will be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Presiding/Associate Judge, on the 8TH day of January, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., at the Marianas Business Plaza, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the order should not be made.
For further particulars, please refer to the Petition on file herein, or contact counsel for Petitioner, Joey P. San Nicolas, P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950; telephone (670) 234-7659 and email jpsn@sannicolaslaw.net.
Pursuant to Rule 21, NMI R. Prob. P, notice is hereby given to all creditors of the decedent, JULIANA ROMOLOR ILO, or of her estate, that they must file their claims with the Clerk of the Superior Court, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, within sixty (60) days of the first publication of this Notice, or the claims will be forever barred.
Dated this 3rd day of December, 2019.
Patrick V. Diaz, Clerk of Court
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Business

668K will lose food stamp benefits under new work rules

WASHINGTON (AP)—Hundreds of thousands of Americans who rely on the federal food stamp program will lose their benefits under a new Trump administration rule that will tighten work requirements for recipients.

The move by the administration is the latest in its attempt to scale back the social safety net for low-income Americans. It is the first of three proposed rules targeting the Supplemental Nutrition Program, known as SNAP, to be finalized. The program feeds more than 36 million people.

The plan, announced Wednesday, will limit states from exempting work-eligible adults from having to maintain steady employment in order to receive benefits.

The Agriculture Department estimates the change would save roughly \$5.5 billion over five years and cut benefits for roughly 688,000 SNAP recipients. That's down from its original estimate that 750,000 people would lose benefits.

Under current rules, work-eligible able-bodied adults without dependents and between the ages of 18 and 49 can currently receive only three months of SNAP benefits in a three-year period if they don't meet the 20-hour work requirement. But states with high unemployment rates or a demonstrable lack of suf-

ficient jobs can waive those time limits.

The new rule imposes stricter criteria states must meet in order to issue waivers. Under the plan, states can only issue waivers if a city or county has an unemployment rate of 6% or higher. The waivers will be good for one year and will require the governor to support the request.

The final rule will be published in the federal register Thursday, and go into effect in April.

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said the rule will help move people "from welfare to work."

"We want to encourage people by giving them a helping hand, but not an infinitely giving hand," he said.

Congressional Democrats and advocates for the poor were quick to condemn the administration's actions.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said the plan will only serve to punish workers whose jobs are seasonal or unreliable.

"This administration is out of touch with families who are struggling to make ends meet by working seasonal jobs or part time jobs with unreliable hours," said Stabenow, the top Democrat on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry.

House Republicans unsuccessfully pushed to include SNAP work requirement provisions in last year's farm bill.

Stabenow said "there's a reason" they didn't make it into the final version.

Robert Greenstein, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, said the rule would disproportionately affect minorities. He urged better job training and a higher minimum wage instead.

"Denying them basic food and nutrition is not the route

that a fair and compassionate administration of either party should take," he said in a statement.

Over the past year the Agriculture Department has proposed three significant changes to the food stamp program. In addition to restricting time limit waivers, the USDA has proposed eliminating broad-based categorical eligibility, a

measure that allows recipients of certain non-cash public benefits to automatically qualify for food stamps, and changing how utility costs are factored into benefit calculations.

Brandon Lipp, deputy under secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Nutrition and Consumer Services, did not say when the department will finalize the

other two proposed rules.

The Urban Institute in a study released last month estimated that taken together, the three measures would affect roughly 2.2 million households, and 3.7 million individual beneficiaries.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., blasted the Trump administration's efforts to reduce public benefits.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
 Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.mp>
 Tels: (670) 234-6866 | 234-9447 | 234-7689 | 234-7670 | Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE
 12/06/19
 Notice for Public Comment
 Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget	Proposed Reprogramming Amount:	Proposed Revised Project Budget:	Current IDIS Funded Amount:	
2018/691	CDBG	Rehabilitation of the Sinapalo Children's Park Roof	CNMI Office of Grants Management	\$284,910.80	(\$106,466.00)	\$178,444.80	\$284,910.80	
Total Reprogrammed from Activities:								
2018/699	CDBG	Purchase of Fire Pumper Truck for the Department of Fire and Emergency Services	CNMI Department of Fire Fire and Emergency Services	\$450,000.00	\$106,466.00	\$556,466.00	\$450,000.00	
Total Reprogrammed to Activities:								
						\$106,466.00		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) that we publish a "Public Notice" on reprogramming of funds over \$50,001.00. Therefore, comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central office located in Garapan, Saipan or before January 7, 2019, no later than 4:30 p.m. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at (670)234-6866/9447.

/s/
 Jesse S. Palacios
 Corporate Director

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP20-CHCC/HEMODIALYSIS-001**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 06, 2019 TIME: 10:00 AM

"TWO BIOLAB 4400M DIGITAL REVERSE OSMOSIS SYSTEM FOR MAR COR PURIFICATION"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO RFP'S TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
 CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
 CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP20-CHCC/HEMODIALYSIS-002**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 20, 2019 TIME: 10:00 AM

"FULL AUTOMATION & INTEGRATION OF EMR SYSTEM"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
 CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
 CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950, Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
 TEL. NO. 664-8300 • FAX NO. 664-8315

NOTICE OF APPLICATION
 As of December 06, 2019

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

APPLICANT	DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED	APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TYPE	STATUS
1. Mariana Acquisition Corporation dba IP&E	11/14/2019 SPI-2020-X-010	Guard House & Laboratory Building	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Approved* 11/25/2019
2. Black Bison Travel Corporation	11/19/2019 SLR-2018-X-117-R2 Amendment 2020-1	Sail Boat Operation	Mañagaha	Lagoon & Reef	Approved 12/03/2019
3. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation	11/20/2019 SW-2020-X-011	Koa Lane 6" Waterline Installation	Mt. Tapochao, Saipan	Wetland	Approved* 12/03/2019
4. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation	11/26/2019 SPI-2020-X-012	Power Plant 4 Drainage Improvements	Puerto Rico, Saipan	Ports & Industrial	Under Review*
5. Tinian Hairui Real Estate Co., LLC dba Xingsha Hotel	03/15/2019 TMS-2019-X-020	Xingsha Hotel	San Jose, Tinian	Major-Siting	Re-scheduled for Final Determination* 12/10/2019

NMIAC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the CRM Regulations.

Nation

Across Capitol Hill, impeachment saga shifts

WASHINGTON (AP)—A different chairman. A committee twice the size. A shift from evidence to law.

Wednesday's Judiciary Committee hearing was full of signs that the impeachment of President Donald Trump is advancing away from the drama of his Ukraine conduct toward the grave business of approving charges against him. That meant turning from tales of international intrigue and shadow diplomacy to scholarly talk about what the founders meant when they wrote the impeachment standard of "high crimes and misdemeanors" into the Constitution.

For a change, the famously combative Judiciary Committee plunged through the proceedings with comity and restraint. Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., on the hot seat to deliver experts who say Trump's behavior is impeachable, gavels the committee through a handful of objections and roll call votes. For long stretches, 41 of the the fiercest partisans in the House sat through the professors' testimony as quietly as church mice.

"I'll give the chairman credit," ranking Republican Doug Collins of Georgia said in the late afternoon. "He's actually following proper procedure."

The relative peace on the dais belied the bitterness that remains between the parties



House Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., right, swears in a witness during a hearing before the House Judiciary Committee on the constitutional grounds for the impeachment of President Donald Trump, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019, on Capitol Hill in Washington. AP

over whether Trump abused his office by pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democrat Joe Biden — and whether his actions are impeachable.

Partisan bickering and grousing bubbled forth at times. Nadler raised some hackles by suggesting that the still-to-be-decided impeachment articles might go beyond Trump's plans on Ukraine and wrap in his conduct during special counsel Robert Muel-

ler's Russia investigation.

"This is Act II of the three-part tragedy of impeachment," said Rep. Ben Cline, R-Va.

Republicans also took aim at a Democratic witness, Stanford law professor Pamela Karlan, who had joked early in the day that the president "can name his son Barron, he can't make him a baron."

She was trying to make the point that Trump is a president, not a king. Nonetheless, she

apologized. First lady Melania Trump said Karlan "should be ashamed of your very angry and obviously biased public pander-

ing, and using a child to do it."

Broadly, there clearly was a shift afoot across Capitol Hill and the sense that the process

Harris exit points to hurdles facing minority candidates

Kamala Harris cloaked her presidential campaign in the promise of becoming the first black woman in the White House. That wasn't enough for donors and supporters, including black voters.

The California senator abruptly withdrew from the race on Tuesday after her once-promising campaign failed to coalesce around a message that would resonate with voters. And without clear support from voters, Harris couldn't raise the money needed to keep going.

Responsibility for the collapse of a presidential campaign almost always rests with the candidate. But Harris' exit also demonstrates the unique challenges facing candidates of color in the 2020 campaign. As Democratic voters of all races almost singularly obsess over who is seen as best positioned to defeat President Donald Trump next year, candidates who aren't white are largely seen as not fitting the bill.

With less than two months before voting begins, those judgments—right or wrong—

are becoming fatal as donors watch these cues to decide when to pull back.

"It's the money, it's the support, it's the polls. ... It's an assumption for black candidates that their campaigns are long shots," said Quentin James, the founder and executive director of Collective-PAC, an organization aimed at building black political power.

"We're left to wonder why is it that a candidate's race still impacts how much money they can raise or how much support they get from institutional Democratic donors."

Of course, Barack Obama, the first black president, is one of the most successful Democratic fundraisers, still collecting millions of dollars for the party nearly three years after he left the White House. And plenty of white candidates have had money problems this year.

John Hickenlooper, the former governor of Colorado, couldn't raise enough money for his presidential bid and chose to run for the U.S. Senate instead. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York is a power-

ACROSS THE NATION

Military: Sailor shoots 3 at Pearl Harbor, takes own life

HONOLULU (AP)—A U.S. sailor shot and wounded three civilian Department of Defense employees at the Pearl Harbor shipyard Wednesday before taking their own life, the military said. Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, one of the Navy's major installations, said the shooting began around 2:30 p.m. at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. The military didn't release a motive or any identifying information about the sailor who opened fire. Two hospitals said they were each treating a victim but didn't have details on their conditions. The base has reopened following a lockdown. The shipyard repairs, maintains and modernizes the ships and submarines of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which is headquartered at Pearl Harbor. The base is the home port for 10 destroyers and 15 submarines. Hawaii Gov. David Ige said the White House has offered assistance from federal agencies and that the state is also ready to help if needed. "I join in solidarity with the people of Hawaii as we express our heartbreak over this tragedy and concern for those affected by the shooting," Ige said in a statement. The shipyard is across the harbor from the Pearl Harbor

National Memorial, which on Saturday will mark the 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack that propelled the U.S. into World War II. More than 2,300 Americans died in the attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

Police say missing Texas woman killed; man arrested in death

EL PASO, Texas (AP)—A Texas woman who went missing after going on a date in July was killed, and a man has been arrested in her death, police said Wednesday. El Paso police said the body of Erika Andrea Gaytan, 29, has not been recovered. She was last heard from July 13 after going to a concert. "Her body has not been found, but based on forensic and other evidence gathered over the course of the investigation detectives have reason to believe that she is deceased and was the victim of a murder," police spokesman Enrique Carrillo said in a statement. Ricardo Marquez, 28, of El Paso has been arrested and charged with her murder, Carrillo said. He is being held on \$1 million bond. Police issued a missing person alert in July describing Gaytan as "endangered." She was last seen by her family on the day of the concert, and they reported her missing on July 16. Gaytan's family said when she went missing that it was not like her to go off and

leave her 7-year-old son behind. According to a police affidavit, Marquez told detectives he had taken Gaytan to his home after their date, but they argued and Gaytan used a ride-hailing app to get a lift. However, police said no such order was made from her phone.

Hundreds of Yellowstone bison to be culled this winter

BOZEMAN, Mont. (AP)—National park officials in Wyoming have announced plans for the selective slaughter of between 600 and 900 Yellowstone bison this winter to help manage population numbers. The Bozeman Daily Chronicle reported Tuesday that the officials expect most of the animals to be taken by hunters or shipped to slaughter. Some would stay alive in corrals or under park quarantine. Officials say the exact number of bison expected to be culled out of the estimated 4,900 depends on the winter migration. State, federal and tribal agencies managing bison say the winter plan was finalized Tuesday under the Interagency Bison Management Plan, a day after a judge rejected an attempt to block bison hunts this year. Officials say the plan includes putting 110 bison into brucellosis quarantine to produce disease-free bison.

Asia

North Korea warns US against meeting on its human rights

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—North Korea warned Wednesday that tensions on the Korean peninsula will increase and the situation “take a turn for the worse again” if the United States goes ahead with a U.N. Security Council meeting on the country’s human rights situation.

North Korea’s U.N. ambassador, Kim Song, said in a letter to the 14 other council members obtained by The Associated Press that Pyongyang considers any council meeting on its human rights “another serious provocation” resulting from the United States’ “hostile policy” and “will respond strongly to the last.”

“The United States and those countries on board shall bear full responsibility,” he warned.

The United States holds the Security Council presidency this month and diplomats said the Trump administration is planning a meeting on North Korea’s human rights situation, probably on Dec. 10. The U.S. Mission did not respond to an email asking about the meeting.

The council discussed the rights situation in North Korea from 2014 through 2017, but skipped 2018.

The meetings went ahead only after a procedural vote in the 15-member council where at least nine nations are required to support holding a session. A similar vote would be required for a meeting this month.

HK residents living with tear gas worry of effects

HONG KONG (AP)—By day, the small commercial kitchen in a Hong Kong industrial building produces snacks. At night, it turns into a secret laboratory assembling a kit for pro-democracy protesters seeking to detox after repeated exposure to tear gas.

Volunteers seated around a kitchen island sort and pack multicolored pills into small resealable bags. At another table, a woman makes turmeric pills by dipping gelatin capsules into a shallow dish of the deep orange spice.

“Police have used so much tear gas and people are suffering,” said the owner of the kitchen, speaking on condition of anonymity because she fears repercussions for her business. “We want to especially help frontline protesters, who have put their lives on the line for the city.”

Hong Kong police have fired more than 10,000 tear gas canisters to quell violent protests that have rocked the city for six months. The move-

ment’s demands include fully democratic elections and an investigation into police use of force, including tear gas.

Its heavy and prolonged use in Hong Kong — one of the world’s most densely populated cities and known for its concrete jungle of high-rises — is unusual and has sparked health fears.

While there’s no evidence of long-term health effects, it’s also largely untested territory.

“I don’t think there have been circumstances where there has been this level of repeated exposure for people to tear gas. What’s going on in Hong Kong is pretty unprecedented,” said Alistair Hay, a British toxicologist from the University of Leeds.

Police have fired it in cramped residential areas and near hospitals, malls and schools, affecting not only protesters but also children, the elderly and the sick.

Some worry that tear gas residue could stick for days or weeks to asphalt, walls, venti-

lation ducts and other places. Parents, schools and various community groups have demanded to know the chemical makeup of the gas — which police won’t divulge — so they can clean up properly.

In the absence of official information, some parents have stopped taking their kids to parks, and online tips urge mothers to refrain from breastfeeding for a few hours if they are exposed to the gas. Many avoided fresh fruits after a wholesale market that supplies half of the city’s supply was gassed last month.

New daily rituals include using a baking soda solution to bathe, wash clothes and clean surfaces. Tips shared by protesters include not bathing in hot water after exposure as it is believed it will open pores and let the chemicals seep in.

The kitchen owner making detox kits said she wants to help protesters, who often avoid seeking treatment at hospitals to hide their identity and avoid possible arrest.



This undated photo provided on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019, by the North Korean government shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, speaks to lieutenants during his visit to Mount Paektu, North Korea.

statement after closed Security Council consultations they requested on North Korea’s latest missile launches on Nov. 28, where they were briefed by U.N. political chief Rosemary DiCarlo. The 15-member council did not issue any statement.

The Europeans again urged North Korea “to engage in good faith in meaningful negotiations with the United States aimed at denuclearization, and to take concrete steps to abandoning all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.”

“There is no other way to achieve security and stability on the Korean peninsula,” the statement said. “Continued provocations risk undermining the prospect for successful negotiations.”

North Korea has ramped up its missile tests in recent months, and experts say the launches are likely to continue as a way to pressure Washington into meeting Pyongyang’s demand for new proposals to revive nuclear diplomacy by the end of December.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Chinese foreign minister arrives in South Korea for talks

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in South Korea on Wednesday for his first visit in four years amid efforts to patch up relations damaged by Seoul’s decision to host a U.S. anti-missile system that Beijing perceives as a security threat. Meeting South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha in Seoul, Wang described the countries as “close neighbors” that should strengthen cooperation in the face of fast-moving regional politics. In what appeared to be a jab at the Trump administration, which has been locked in a tense trade dispute with China, Wang asserted that “unilateralism” is currently the biggest threat to world peace and stability and called for Seoul and Beijing to jointly uphold “multilateralism” and free trade. Kang said Wang’s visit provides an opportunity to hold discussions on improving “weak” areas in bilateral relations and exchange views on denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula and stabilizing peace. Upon his arrival at Incheon International Airport, Wang told reporters it was unclear whether Washington and Beijing could strike a trade deal by the end of the year and said negotiations should be based on “mutual respect

Indian paramilitary soldier kills 5 colleagues, self

PATNA, India (AP)—An Indian paramilitary soldier fatally shot five of his colleagues and later killed himself Wednesday in a firing incident in a camp in central India. State administrator Dinesh Kumar Nag said the incident occurred in Narayanpur district in Chhattisgarh state. What provoked the firing by the soldier is being investigated, said Vivek Kumar Pandey, a spokesman for the Indo-Tibetan Border Force. He said the soldiers were walking in a group when the shooting started. Those who tried to seize the weapon were gunned down by the soldier, he said. Pandey said five soldiers were killed on the spot and one of the three injured soldiers later died in a hospital. Earlier, reports said the soldiers shot at each other in Wednesday’s incident. Narayanpur is 225 kilometers (140 miles) south of Raipur, the state capital.

3 charged over Australia’s largest crystal meth seizure

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Three people have been charged with drug offenses over Australia’s largest seizure of methamphetamine, which had been smuggled to

Melbourne from Bangkok in stereo speakers. Police estimate the 1.596 metric tons (1.759 U.S. tons) of the drug also known as ice and crystal meth had a street value of AU\$1.197 billion (\$818 million). The 37 kilograms (82 pounds) of heroin also seized was the largest haul of that drug in Australia since 2017, a police statement said. Two men, aged 37 and 38, and a 37-year-old woman were appearing in a Melbourne court on Thursday charged with drug importation offenses that carry potential life prison sentences, police said. They have not been named. They were arrested after police executed search warrants on Wednesday at several Melbourne properties. Australian Border Force officers detected the haul in vacuum-sealed packages concealed in speakers at the Melbourne waterfront in April. A larger consignment of 1.728 metric tons (1.905 U.S. tons) of crystal meth bound for Australia was seized in California in January. Australian police said then it was the largest shipment of the drug bound for Australia and the largest ever domestic seizure in the United States. Australia is an attractive market for international drug traffickers because of the relatively high prices that Australian drug users are willing to pay.

World

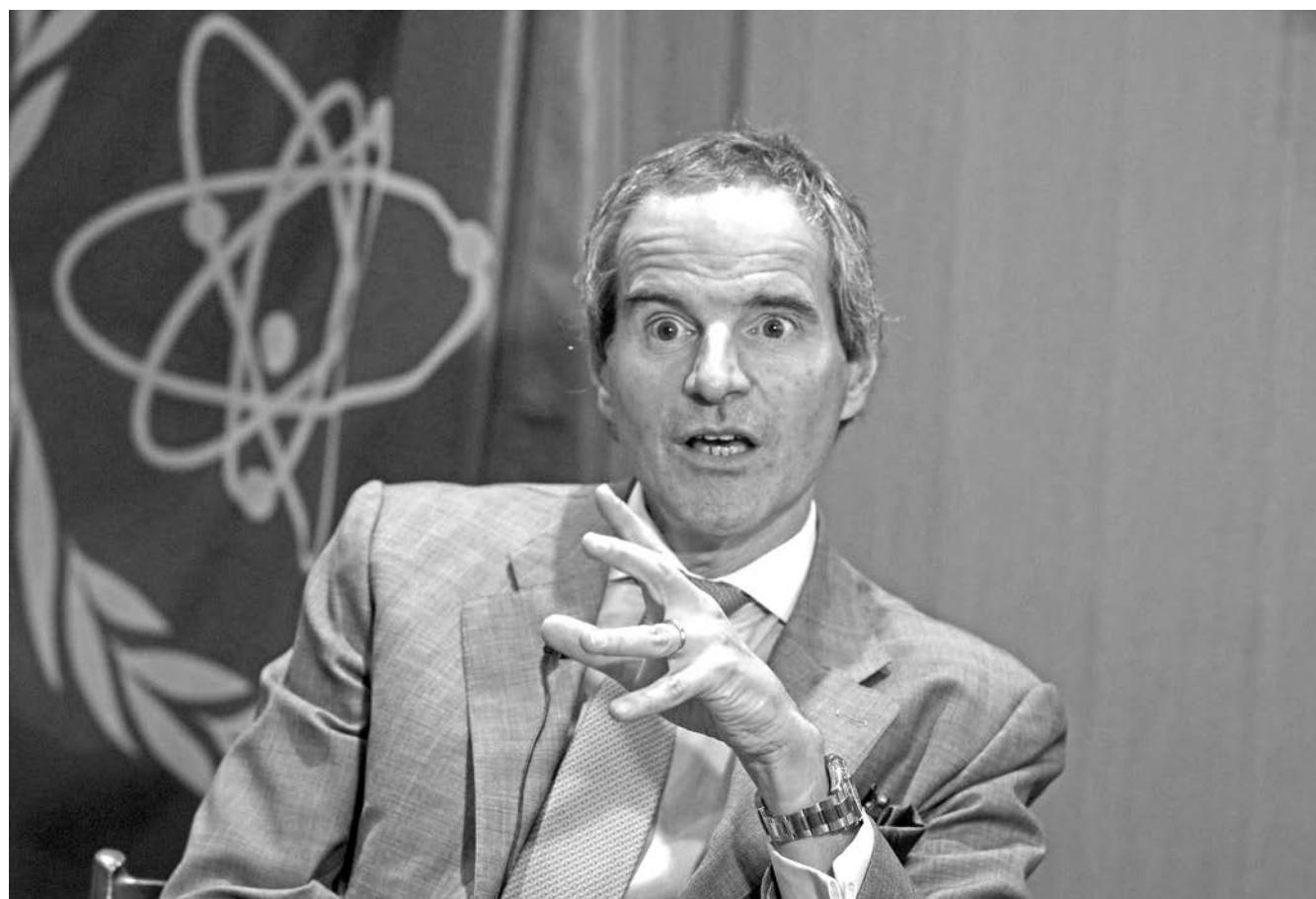
Europeans rap Iran for working on nuclear-capable missiles

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—France, Germany and the United Kingdom say “Iran’s developments of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles” go against a U.N. Security Council resolution calling on Tehran not to undertake any activity related to such missiles.

Ambassadors from the three European nations urged U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a letter circulated Wednesday to inform the council in his next report that Iran’s ballistic missile activity is “inconsistent” with the call in a council resolution endorsing the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

The letter cites footage released on social media April 22, 2019, of a previously unseen flight test of a new Shahab-3 medium-range ballistic missile variant “equipped with a maneuverable re-entry vehicle.” It says: “The Shahab-3 booster used in the test is a Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 system and as such is technically capable of delivering a nuclear weapon.”

The Europeans noted that a 2015 report by the International Atomic Energy Agency on possible military dimensions of Iran’s nuclear program concluded “that extensive evidence indicated detailed Iranian research in 2002-2003



Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi from Argentina, gestures during an interview with The Associated Press at the International Center in Vienna, Austria, Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019. AP

on arming the Shahab-3 with a nuclear warhead.”

Officials in the Trump administration also have said Iran is working to obtain nuclear-capable missiles, something the Iranians deny.

U.S. President Donald

Trump withdrew from the nuclear agreement in May 2018. But it is still supported by the five other parties—France, Britain, Russia and China, which are all veto-wielding Security Council members, and Germany, which is cur-

rently serving a two-year term on the council.

The letter says “France, Germany and the United Kingdom assert once again our firm conclusion that Iran’s development of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and related technologies is inconsistent” with the missile provision in the council resolution.

That provision urges Iran “not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.” But it does not require Tehran to halt such activity, and the Iranian government insists all its mis-

sile activities are legal and not nuclear-related.

The Europeans’ letter says they used the Missile Technology Control Regime “performance characteristics” that a rocket system would need to be capable of delivering at least a 500-kilogram payload to a range of at least 300 kilometers (185 miles) to be nuclear capable.

France, Germany and the UK gave four examples of “Iranian activity inconsistent” with the July 20, 2015 Security Council resolution endorsing the nuclear agreement, which was signed six days earlier:

UN says 58 migrants dead as boat capsizes off Mauritania

DAKAR, Senegal (AP)—At least 58 people are dead after a boat carrying dozens of migrants capsized in the Atlantic Ocean off the West African nation of Mauritania, the U.N. migration agency said Wednesday. It said 83 people swam to shore.

It was one of the deadliest disasters this year among migrants trying to make the perilous journey to Europe.

The boat carrying at least 150 people had been low on fuel while approaching Mauritania, the International Organization for Migration said in a statement. Survivors were being helped by Mauritanian authorities in the northern city of Nouadhibou, the U.N. agency said.

Survivors said the boat, with women and children on board, had left Gambia on Nov. 27.

An unknown number of injured were taken to the hospital in Nouadhibou.

“The Mauritanian authorities are very efficiently coordinating the response with the agencies currently present in Nouadhibou,” said Laura Lungarotti, chief of mission in Mauritania with the migration agency.

There was no immediate statement from authorities in Gambia, a small West African nation from which many migrants set off in hopes of reaching Europe.

Despite Gambia’s small size, more than 35,000 Gambian migrants arrived in Europe between 2014 and 2018, according to the U.N. migration agency.

A 22-year oppressive rule by then President Yahya Jammeh severely affected the

In addition to the April 23 flight test of the new Shahab-3 missile variant, it cited:

■ The launch of the Borkan-3, “a new liquid-propelled medium-range ballistic missile, traveling approximately 1,300 kilometers,” which was announced by Iranian-backed Houthi forces in Yemen on Aug. 2, 2019, and is an advancement of Iran’s Qiam-1 missile.

■ The July 24, 2019, launch of a ballistic missile that flew over 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), which media reports indicated was a test launch of a Shahab-3 medium-range missile.

■ The Aug. 29, 2019, attempted launch, reported by Iranian media, of a Safir satellite launch vehicle, which was unsuccessful. U.N. experts have said such launch vehicles share “a great deal of similar materials and technology” with ballistic missiles.

The Europeans’ letter says these activities “are the latest in a long series of advances in Iranian ballistic missile technology” and “furthermore, Iran continues its proliferation of ballistic missile technology in the region” in violation of Security Council resolution.

The Security Council has scheduled a Dec. 19 meeting to discuss implementation of the 2015 resolution on the Iran nuclear deal.

During last year’s meeting, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged the council to again ban Iranian ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons and to maintain an arms embargo that is scheduled to be lifted in 2020 under the nuclear deal.

Mexican president prays with family of dead US dual citizens

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador prayed for the safety of the country with the relatives of nine U.S. dual citizens slaughtered in northern Mexico last month and assured them “at least four” suspects have been detained, a family member said.

Julian LeBaron said that during the family’s Monday meeting with López Obrador and his Cabinet at Mexico City’s National Palace, the president pledged to visit the region where the Nov. 4 massacre took place.

Mexican politicians traditionally avoid open displays of faith, and López Obrador has been unusual in recent comments referring to himself as a “follower of Jesus Christ.”

“We just bowed our heads” and “prayed for the president and the country, for peace and goodwill, and to protect our loved ones, and protect our country,” LeBaron said Tuesday.

The extended LeBaron family has lived in northern Mexico for decades and iden-

tify as part of the Mormon tradition though they are not affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. Dual nationals, they were hotly criticized by some for asking U.S. President Donald Trump to designate Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations, something Trump said he would do.

“We think we should all be humble enough, and that’s something we discussed with the president, to recognize that we have an immense problem on our hands and we need help,” LeBaron said. “Of course, we wouldn’t like to see a military invasion.”

Three young mothers and six children were killed in the attack near the border of the northern states of Sonora and Chihuahua. Officials have said a drug cartel is suspected in the attack, but they initially suggested that one of the mothers’ vehicles was set afire unintentionally, when a bullet hit the gas tank.

LeBaron said officials have confirmed to them that the killers filmed the attack themselves and set fire to the SUV in which one mother—Le-

Baron’s cousin—and her four children died. He said family members have seen the video.

LeBaron is now trying to press for the kind of local anti-crime organizing that his community in Chihuahua state put together in 2009 after a previous attack by drug cartel gunmen.

He envisions communities allowed to form a posse, depose citizens and bear arms to fight cartel incursions.

“We’ve been invaded by criminal terrorist organizations within our own country, within our own communities, and our government has absolutely failed to stop the thugs,” said LeBaron. “At some point we have to assume responsibility as citizens to put a stop to it.”

“The whole western United States was basically built on a structure that worked for communities, what we call the Wild West was never the wild West,” he said. “Within the community they basically had all the powers to hold people accountable. The whole town could be depowered to bring criminals before justice.”

country’s economy, especially for Gambia’s youth, and contributed greatly to the surplus of migrants hoping to get to Europe or elsewhere.

Since Jammeh was voted out in 2016 and fled into exile in January 2017, European countries have been pushing to return asylum seekers. But Gambia’s economy still suffers.

The coastal nation was shaken earlier this year by the collapse of British travel company Thomas Cook. At the time, Gambia’s tourism minister said the government convened an emergency meeting on the collapse, while some Gambians said the shutdown could have a devastating impact on tourism, which contributes more than 30% of the country’s GDP.

Off The Wall

Cats to be put on leashes to protect wildlife? EU says no

BRUSSELS (AP)—Put domestic cats on a leash to better protect threatened birds and the environment? The European Union says that would deny mankind's furry friend its unalienable right to roam.

The EU's executive said Thursday that it is "a strong defender of free movement rights — including of cats" and "categorically" denied it would ever force cats to be kept indoors or on a leash, as one scientific study suggests.

Tilburg University scientists wrote in Oxford's Journal of Environmental Law that free-ranging domestic cats "impact biodiversity through predation, disturbance, competition, disease and hybridization," and added that the predatory impact is worse than of-



In this Thursday, Feb. 2, 2017 file photo, two cats sit at the top of the stairway in the middle of a small fisherman's landing in Valletta, Malta.

AP

ten assumed.

They argued that EU laws and directives could effec-

tively force owners to keep them indoors or on a leash outdoors.

Electric eel powers aquarium's Christmas lights

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP)—Visitors to the Tennessee Aquarium may be shocked to learn that an electric eel named Miguel Wattson is lighting up a Christmas tree.

A special system connected to Miguel's tank enables his shocks to power strands of lights on a nearby tree, according to a news release.

Miguel releases low-voltage blips of electricity when he is trying to find food, aquarist Kimberly Hurt said.

That translates to a rapid, dim blinking of the Christmas lights. When he is eating or excited he emits higher voltage shocks which cause bigger flashes.

Wattson has his own Twitter account where he shares tweets generated by his sparky self, courtesy of coding by Tennessee Tech University's iCube center.

"They combined electrical engineering and emerging business communication to

give the eel a voice," center director Kevin Liska previously said in a aquarium statement.

In between Miguel's tweets boasting statements like "SHAZAM!!!!" and "ka-BLAMEROO!!!!," a video posted to the account shows Miguel shaking in his tank as lights on the nearby tree sputter on and off.

The aquarium hopes the Christmas tree will spark love and appreciation for the unusual freshwater fish.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Hospital sends \$3K bill for pulling toy from girl's nose

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A Las Vegas mother says she received a \$3,000 bill after doctors removed a plastic doll shoe stuck in her 3-year-old daughter's nose. KTNV-TV reported Tuesday that Lucy Branson stuck two pink Polly Pocket plastic doll shoes up her nose -- one in each nostril. Her mother Katy Branson says she was able to remove one of the shoes but even urgent care couldn't reach the second shoe. Branson says she then took her daughter to Dignity Health St. Rose Dominican Siena Campus in Henderson where physicians used a tweezer-like tool to successfully remove the shoe in seconds. The Branson family says they initially received a bill for \$3,000 but the charge was reduced to \$1,700 because of a high deductible medical policy.

Man using magnet fishes WWI-era grenade from Michigan river

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP)—A magnet-wielding angler has fished a World War I-era grenade from a western Michigan river. WOOD-TV reports the angler found the explosive Tuesday after dangling the magnet from a bridge in the Grand River in Grand Rapids. Joseph Alexander told the television station he "thought it looked like a grenade, but not one" he'd seen before. Alexander said he posted pho-

tos of it online and people commented that it was a grenade and he should call police. Grand Rapids police say the device is a "German Granatenwerfer" and that it will be stored until detonated safely. Sgt. John Wittkowski said since the device was so old and had been submerged for a long time it likely was no longer very dangerous. Alexander said magnet fishing is a hobby.

Police: Man called out of work drunk, tried to rob workplace

OAKWOOD, Ga. (AP)—Police in Georgia say a man called out of his Steak 'n Shake job because he was "intoxicated," then showed up anyway and demanded money while holding a co-worker at gunpoint. The Gainesville Times reports 20-year-old Kentarias Gowans, of Flowery Branch, is charged with offenses including aggravated assault. Oakwood Police investigator Todd Templeton says Gowans called out on Thanksgiving, went to the restaurant that night, held a gun to a co-worker's head and demanded money. Police say responding officers arrived to see employees running from the business, which had customers at the time. Police say an apparently still intoxicated Gowans briefly raised the gun at officers before dropping it. He was arrested after a brief struggle during which a stun gun was used. It's unclear if Gowans has a lawyer.

Science & Technology

Cashier-less stores?

By BRITTANY MEILING
THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

SAN DIEGO—A technology startup in San Diego has just raised \$30 million from investors to continue building out its software for cashier-less, "grab-and-go" stores. The model, popularized by Amazon Go, allows shoppers to simply walk into a store, grab items from the shelves, and walk out—with the receipt sent directly to their mobile device.

The startup, Accel Robotics, is developing computer vision software—along with cameras, sensors and store equipment—to make this concept work. In fact, the startup can build out an entire modular store for its customers, pre-loaded with the computer brains to enable a "checkout-free" experience.

The new money came in a round led by Japanese fund-

ing giant SoftBank, with further participation from New Ground Ventures, Toyo Kanetsu Corporate Venture Investment Partnership and RevTech Ventures.

Co-founder and CEO Brandon Maseda said Accel Robotics already has its technology deployed in North America and Japan, including at restaurants and drug store chains. However, Maseda was slim on specifics, saying he couldn't reveal who his customers were just yet. Broadly, the company plans to create stores from scratch—and partner with existing retailers—to help bring small-format stores to locations that couldn't accommodate larger buildings. Think university campuses, corporate offices and office parks, military bases, airports and other travel hubs.

"The idea is to deliver

small, modular stores closer to where people live and work," Maseda said.

Accel Robotics was founded in 2015 and was incubated early on by San Diego's tech accelerator EvoNexus, along with a Texas-based incubator RevTech Ventures. This new capital is in addition to \$7 million previously raised, bringing its total capital to \$37 million.

The startup was founded by Maseda, along with Marcus Buibas, Brain Corp.'s former director of engineering; and Martin Cseh, a Harvard University graduate. Just a couple of years ago, the three founders were working out of a tiny glass office in EvoNexus with only two employees. Today, they have an office in San Diego's Kearny Mesa neighborhood, where they employ 40 people. The startup also has offices in Argentina and Tokyo, employing a total of 60 people.

Risks of upgrading to Windows 10

Q : Dell's website says that my six-year-old Windows 7 laptop (an Inspiron 5521) was tested and found compatible with the earliest versions of Windows 10 (called build 1507 and build 1511.) But it isn't listed as being tested with newer versions. How risky is it for me to upgrade to the latest version of Windows 10? Or should I go for an older version?

A: There's no clear-cut answer for whether you should upgrade your Windows 7 PC to Windows 10. Here's why:

■ You can't upgrade to the older versions of Windows 10 that you know are compatible with your PC, because they've been discontinued and pose a significant risk. A PC using Windows 10 "build 1507" or "build 1511" no longer gets security updates.

■ Upgrading to the current version of Windows 10 ("build 1909" introduced in November), is a bit risky because Dell hasn't tested your computer with it. I suspect that Dell has simply quit testing older PC models for Windows 10 compatibility. That said, there's no certainty how well the latest version of Windows 10 will work.

As a result, I have to fall back on some standard advice: Upgrading any PC that is six years old isn't a great idea, because technology

TECH Q&A
By STEVE ALEXANDER
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



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keeps changing and the PC doesn't. Even if your older PC works with the current version of Windows 10, a future Microsoft update to the operating system might cause problems. And there are likely to be updates to "build 1909" before Microsoft discontinues it (for consumers) in May 2021.

Because of the uncertainty about whether you should upgrade your PC, it would be less risky to buy a new Windows 10 computer.

Q: I'm having problems using a Canon printer-scanner with a Lenovo model N21 Chromebook. I've lost the margins on documents and web pages that I've printed with the Chromebook, and I haven't been able to use the scanner at all. What's wrong?

A: A Chromebook, which is a computer that runs Google's Chrome operating system, doesn't work with a Canon printer-scanner the same way a Windows PC or a Mac would (by downloading an app.) Printing must be set up using Chromebook internal software, and scanning

only works if you have the right Canon model.

A Chromebook connects to a printer in one of three ways: Directly using a USB cable; over your home Wi-Fi network; or via a service called "Google Cloud Print" that sends documents to your wireless printer over the internet. The USB cable and home Wi-Fi methods are considered the most reliable (see setup directions at tinyurl.com/yy9gj2yy). The Google Cloud Print service (see setup directions at tinyurl.com/qvt5jt) will be discontinued in December 2020 (see tinyurl.com/vb377fc). Note that only some Canon printers are compatible with Google Cloud Print (see a list at tinyurl.com/w9z5r4n).

Scanning requires a different setup. You need a scanner that can upload a scanned image to Google Drive, an internet-based storage service. Once the image is uploaded, the Chromebook can retrieve it from Google Drive. However, Canon offers only a few printer-scanners that can access Google Drive (see tinyurl.com/t6zfuyj).

Life & Style

Cavill:



AP
This image released by Netflix shows Henry Cavill in a scene from "The Witcher," premiering on Netflix on Dec. 20.

Rapper T.I.'s remarks spark NY bill to end virginity tests

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP)—New York could bar doctors from performing so-called virginity tests under legislation prompted by the rapper T.I.'s controversial claim that he has a gynecologist check his daughter's hymen annually.

Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages said Tuesday the bill she submitted last month would prohibit medical professionals from performing or supervis-

ing such examinations, though it's unclear how common they are in the U.S. New York would also consider it sexual assault when such tests are performed outside of a medical setting.

"It's medically unnecessary," the Democrat said. "It's often painful, humiliating, traumatic. All in all, it's a form of violence against women."

Her bill has attracted support from three Democratic

lawmakers, and Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration officials called the practice "disturbing." Solages said no other states have such bans.

The World Health Organization, U.N. Women and the U.N. Human Rights office called for the end of the tests worldwide last year. They said the testing often involves inspecting the hymen or inserting fingers into the vagina.

T.I., also known as Clifford Joseph Harris, Jr., drew criticism

when he said in a November episode of the podcast "Ladies like Us" that he asked a gynecologist to check his teenage daughter's hymen shortly after her birthday each year. She is now 18.

"I put a sticky note on the door: 'Gyno. Tomorrow. 9:30,'" Harris said.

After his comments prompted backlash on social media, he told Jada Pinkett Smith on the Facebook interview show Red Table Talk he'd been exaggerating and that "he was never in any exam room."

Gabrielle Union, NBC meet over 'America's Got Talent' firing

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Gabrielle Union and NBC both said Wednesday that they have had a "productive" first conversation on her firing from "America's Got Talent" and her allegations that she was removed over her complaints about racism and other troubling on-set behavior.

"We had a lengthy 5-hour, and what I thought to be, productive meeting yesterday," Union said on Twitter. "I was able to, again, express my unfiltered truth. I led with transparency and my desire and hope for real change."

NBC said in a statement that the "initial conversation was candid and productive. While there will be a further investigation to get a deeper understanding of the facts, we are working with Gabrielle to come to a positive resolution."

Union's attorney Bryan Freedman said Tuesday's meeting, which included rep-

resentatives from Fremantle, the show's production company, was a good start.

"We're waiting to see the next steps on whether NBC is going to make sure that there are real changes made to protect both the contestants and the talent," Freedman said.

Union, an actress best known for her roles in films including "Bring It On" and "Bad Boys II," was a judge on the talent showcase but she and fellow judge Julianne Hough were not asked to return after their first season.

Variety subsequently reported that Union, who is black, believed she was fired because she had asked NBC and the show's producers to address an environment that tolerated racist jokes and remarks, including what she said were multiple notes from producers saying she was wearing her hair "too black" for the "America's Got Talent" audience.

Classic Blue is Pantone Color Institute's 'color of the year'

NEW YORK (AP)—In these uneasy times, as we move along to a new decade, the Pantone Color Institute has reached back in time to calming, confident Classic Blue as its color of the year for 2020.

The color is an anchor offering stability, constancy and connection, said Laurie Pressman, vice president of the global purveyors of color consulting, trendspotting and analysis.

"It's a reassuring presence," she told The Associated Press ahead of Wednesday's reveal.

Akin to maritime blue—not indigo and brighter than navy—Classic Blue evokes a feeling of vast expanse, Pressman said of the shade also known as Pantone 19-4052.

Pressman and her team scoured the worlds of art, fashion and home decor, along

with commercial, graphic and industrial design, to come up with the pick, as they have since Cerulean became the inaugural color of the year for the milestone 2000.

But Classic Blue isn't just about nostalgia, she said. Creators around the globe are putting out modern takes for runways, mobile phones, kitchen appliances and the paint of pricey, forward-looking cars and motorcycles.

At Wednesday's launch event, Pressman insisted the color was in no way a nod to the hue associated with the Democratic Party, though she knew the question would surface.

"This was not a political move for us. This is global. We do not look at color through a political lens. We look at our life through a colorful lens," she told the AP.

Door 'hasn't closed' on Superman, but first, 'Witcher'

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP)—Henry Cavill is all-in on his Netflix fantasy series "The Witcher," but he says the "door hasn't closed" on a return as Superman in the DC cinematic universe.

Cavill last played the superhero in 2017's "Justice League" and it's unclear whether any upcoming movies will feature the character. There are several films based on DC superheroes in the works, including sequels to "Wonder Woman" and "Aquaman."

Cavill dons a long white wig to play monster hunter Geralt of Rivia in "The Witcher," an ambitious eight-episode adaptation of Polish author Andrzej Sapkowski's books. With intense magic, scheming political factions and epic battles, it's targeting the audiences that made "Game of Thrones" a worldwide phenomenon.

"I live in the fantasy genre anyway, that's my hobby. And so for me, it was always—it was always obvious. It was like yes, of course, these shows can be popular," Cavill said. "It was always a target. I

always wanted to bring things like this to the screen in one way, shape or form."

The show premieres on Netflix on Dec. 20, and production begins early next year on a second season.

The series features Cavill's Geralt engaging in intricately choreographed swordplay, relaxing in a bath and talking to his horse—all recognizable moments for fans of the acclaimed hit 2015 role-playing game "The Witcher 3." Cavill says his horse chats recalled his real-life dialogue with his American Akita dog Kal, who shows up regularly on his Instagram feed.

"That's exactly what I was channeling when I was interacting with Roach (the horse), it was 100 percent the relationship Kal and I have," he said. "Geralt may be a little harder. Generally, he's been living in a harsher world and hated by a lot of people for longer than I have."

Cavill was a fan of "The Witcher 3" before he landed the series. He says he imagined himself in the role while playing the game, which runs for dozens of hours.

Kid Rock's Detroit eatery closing

DETROIT (AP)—A Kid Rock-owned restaurant in Detroit's Little Caesars Arena will close once its licensing agreement expires this spring, the singer and arena operator announced separately Wednesday.

The severing of ties between the suburban Detroit-born musician and Ilitch Holdings came days after video surfaced showing Kid Rock ranting against Oprah Winfrey, though neither party tied the parting to the video or the backlash that followed. The split also points to a widening estrangement between Kid Rock and the city he calls home.

"I appreciate all who have patronized our place and still have much love for the city of Detroit and the people/organizations that I have helped there for years, black, white, whatever, but learned long ago, go where you're celebrated, not tolerated," he wrote Wednesday on Facebook.

Kid Rock's Made in Detroit opened in 2017 in Little Caesars Arena, which is home to the NHL's Red Wings and the NBA's Detroit Pistons.

Chris Granger, group presi-

dent of sports and entertainment for Ilitch Holdings, said in a statement that Kid Rock "voluntarily decided" not to renew the deal for the restaurant that expires in April. He said the Ilitch organization has been in contact with the musician.

The Ilitch statement said its "venues are open, inviting, inclusive and respectful to all."

A spokesman for Kid Rock didn't immediately reply to a message seeking comment.

Born Robert Ritchie, Kid Rock grew up in Macomb County, which is just north of Detroit. He performs hip-hop, hard rock, country and Southern rock music.

Apparent cellphone video obtained by TMZ shows Ritchie onstage last month at his steakhouse in Nashville, Tennessee, using graphic language to convey his dislike of Winfrey and Joy Behar, one of the hosts of the ABC talk show "The View."

The video later shows Ritchie -- who appeared to be sitting on the edge of the stage -- being lifted up by security or police officers.

'The Irishman' named best picture by New York Film Critics

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Film Critics Circle named "The Irishman" the year's best film on Wednesday, handing Martin Scorsese's mob epic its second such honor in two days.

It's the second time Scorsese has received the top award from his hometown's critics following 1990's "GoodFellas." They also named him best director in 2006 for "The Departed."

The win added more momentum to the awards-season campaign for "The Irishman," which on Tuesday was also named best film by the National Board of Review. The New York critics additionally bestowed best supporting actor on Joe Pesci's performance in the film.

If "The Irishman" were to go all the way, it would give Net-

flix its first best picture Academy Award. The New York critics last year chose another Netflix title, Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma," as its best film.

The critics selected Lupita Nyong'o ("Us") for best actress and Antonio Banderas ("Pain & Glory") for best actor. Laura Dern was named best supporting actress for her performances in both Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story" and Greta Gerwig's "Little Women."

Best director went to a pair of native New Yorkers: Josh and Benny Safdie, whose upcoming "Uncut Gems" stars Adam Sandler as a dealer in Manhattan's diamond district.

The New York Film Critics Circle, founded in 1935, will hand out the awards for their 85th ceremony on Jan. 7. The

group added two special awards for composer Randy Newman, who scored both "Marriage Story" and "Toy Story 4" this year, and the indie film preservation nonprofit IndieCollect.

The rest of their winners are:

Best Non-Fiction Film:

"Honeyland"

Best Screenplay: "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood"

Best Cinematography:

Claire Mathon for "Portrait of a Lady on Fire"

Best Foreign Language Film: "Parasite"

Best Animated Film: "I Lost My Body"

AP
This image released by Netflix shows Joe Pesci, left, and Robert De Niro in a scene from "The Irishman."



Chris Brown must give up monkeys under judge's restrictions

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Los Angeles judge on Wednesday said Chris Brown must give up all rights to his former pet monkey, pay for its care and not try to buy a new one if he wants charges of illegal animal ownership dropped.

The 30-year-old singer was allowed to enter a diversion program nearly a year after he was charged with two misdemeanors over his possession of a pet capuchin monkey without a permit.

He also must not own any other prohibited species, and submit to searches to prove he isn't.

If Brown meets the conditions, the charges will be dropped in June.

Brown posted a picture to his 44 million Instagram fol-

Brown must permanently forfeit his rights to the monkey, named Fiji, pay \$35,000 to the facility where it is now being housed, and refrain from trying to visit it without making special arrangements.

He also must not own any other prohibited species, and submit to searches to prove he isn't.

If Brown meets the conditions, the charges will be dropped in June.

Brown posted a picture to his 44 million Instagram fol-

lowers in early 2018 showing his daughter cuddling with the capuchin, named Fiji.

California fish and wildlife agents took the monkey away soon after.

Brown is also prohibited from breaking the law in any other way during the span.

He has had several highly publicized run-ins with law enforcement in the decade since he pleaded guilty to the felony assault of his then-girlfriend Rihanna, for which he served five years' probation.

Time ... In Hollywood" and Clint Eastwood's Atlanta Olympics bombing docudrama "Richard Jewell."

The AFI, which only cites American films, added a special award for the Korean thriller "Parasite."

The AFI Awards, now in its 20th year, will be celebrated at a luncheon Jan. 3 in Los Angeles.

AFI names 'Joker,' 'Jojo' among top 10 films of the year

NEW YORK (AP)—The American Film Institute on Wednesday named its top 10 movies of the year, including Todd Phillips' comic-book sensation "Joker," Taika Waititi's World War II romp "Jojo Rabbit" and Lulu Wang's family drama "The Farewell."

The AFI's other top movies of the year are: the Sam

Mendes World War I thriller "1917," Martin Scorsese's crime epic "The Irishman," Rian Johnson's star-studded whodunit "Knives Out," Greta Gerwig's Louisa May Alcott adaptation "Little Women," Noah Baumbach's divorce drama "Marriage Story," Quentin Tarantino's Los Angeles fable "Once Upon a

Time ... In Hollywood" and Clint Eastwood's Atlanta Olympics bombing docudrama "Richard Jewell."

The AFI, which only cites American films, added a special award for the Korean thriller "Parasite."

The AFI Awards, now in its 20th year, will be celebrated at a luncheon Jan. 3 in Los Angeles.

Lady Gaga to headline pre-Super Bowl concert in Miami

NEW YORK (AP)—Lady Gaga is returning to the Super Bowl stage—sort of.

The pop star will perform at AT&T TV Super Saturday Night in Miami on Feb. 1, held a day before Super Bowl 54. The concert will take place at Meridian at Island Gardens and will be livestreamed at

twitter.com/ItsOnATT.

Gaga headlined the Super Bowl halftime show in 2017

ami Gardens, Florida.

AT&T TV Super Saturday Night was previously called DIRECTV Super Saturday Night, which launched in 2011 and has featured high-profile performers like Jay-Z, Rihanna, Justin Timberlake, Taylor Swift, Kanye West, Katy Perry and Lopez.

Willie Nelson says he's not smoking, but is still using pot

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Willie Nelson may have given up smoking, but he hasn't stopped using marijuana.

While in San Antonio last week for two performances, the 86-year-old country music legend told KSAT TV that in an effort to take better care of himself, he no longer smokes.

Nelson, a longtime marijuana advocate, said he "started

smoking cedar bark, went from that to cigarettes to whatever."

Nelson, who owns a company that sells marijuana products, says: "I have abused my lungs quite a bit in the past, so breathing is a little more difficult these days and I have to be careful."

His spokeswoman, Elaine Shock, told The Associated Press in an email Wednesday

that Nelson hasn't given up cannabis, and she points out there are different ways to consume it.

"That said," she said "Willie does what he wants, when he wants, when it comes to smoking."

One thing though Nelson won't be giving up is touring.

"I love the bus," he said. "This is my home."

Lonely husband gives more than he's getting from wife

DEAR HUSBAND: Tell your wife what you have written. She may be feeling overwhelmed and exhausted from taking care of a brand-new baby, or suffer from a common condition called postpartum depression. (It's sometimes referred to as the "baby blues" for a reason.) Urge her to discuss how she has been feeling with her OB/GYN because, with medical help, the condition is treatable. Please don't wait because the sooner this is dealt with, the better it will be for all three of you.

DEAR ABBY: I recently housesat for a friend and her family while they were on vacation because they needed someone to water their plants and take out their dog. Cleaning is a favorite pastime of mine, so while I was there, I did some tidying up. I did not enter any of their bedrooms and only did small tasks such as vacuum and mop the common areas. I genuinely thought I was being considerate by going above and beyond.

When they returned, they seemed shocked and even slightly offended, and made jokes about how I must think they are messy. At the time, it seemed fine, but I understand now it may have been misinterpreted.

Did I cross a boundary, and should I avoid doing this in the future? How should I apologize? I feel terrible for offending them.

CLEANING'S MY THING

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



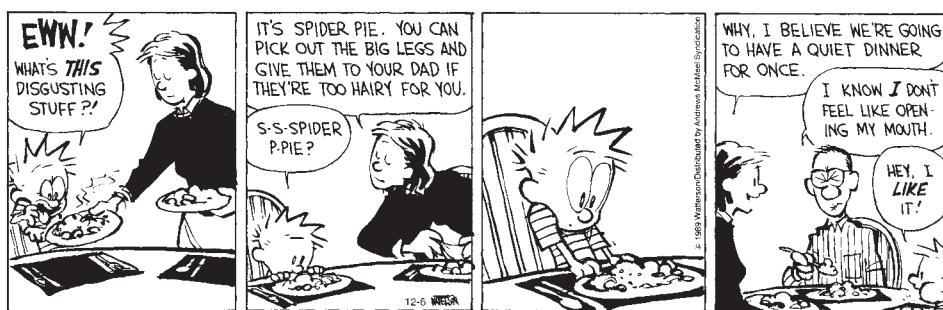
DEAR C.M.T.: Stop beating yourself up and ASK your friend if she was offended that you mopped and dusted while you were housesitting. If the answer is yes, apologize. And when you do, explain that you are somewhat of a "neatnik" and thought they would be pleased to come home and find fewer chores needing to be done. If she's truly offended, you won't be asked to housesit again, but I have a strong hunch you will be.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby - Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

HEARTSICK HUSBAND

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Watterson

Garfield®



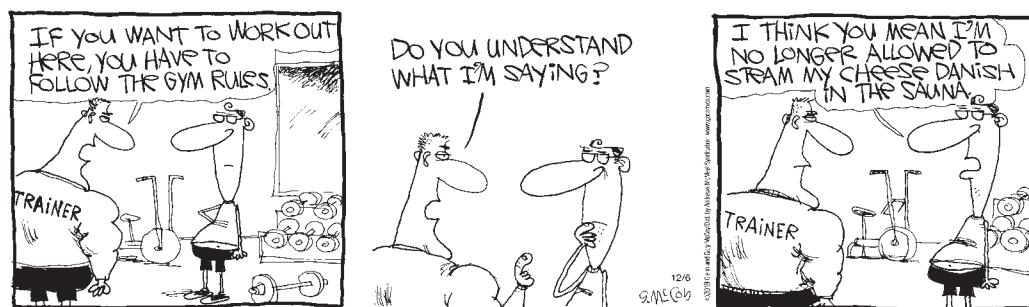
By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	34	Suffix with song or gab	DOWN	20	Barber's tool
1 Recipe abbr.	1	35 Biography	1 AAA job	21	Twistable cookie
4 Nanny's headache	36	"Tiny Alice" playwright	3 "The Tempest"	22	Peter of "M"
8 Fortas and Lincoln	37	Li'l Abner's surname	4 Soup holders	23	Utah city
12 Galley item	38	Aussie greeting	5 Castle	25	Bark
13 "Clumsy me!"	39	Coup d'—	6 Earth Day	26	In single file
14 Fishing rod	40	Absinthe ingredient	7 "For shame!"	27	French river
15 Carpentry	41	Whole range	8 Poise	28	Actress Winslet
17 Low-fat	42	Optimistic	9 Dutch word that means "farmer"	30	Take to the pool
18 Lingerie fabric	43	Conks out	10 Mideast airline	33	All thumbs
19 Part of WWW	44	Amount	11 Fax	34	Imperfection
20 Manages somehow	45	50 Owed	12 Born	36	Fess up
22 Appear ominously	46	51 Blunder	13 Optimistic	37	Calendar quota
24 Raw minerals	47	pans	14 Conks out	38	"Beetle Bailey" dog
25 Compilation of student exercises	48	52 Blunder	15 Stir-fry	39	Evil agency in "Get Smart"
29 Mal de —	49	53 Blunder	16 Pans	40	Seize
30 Tender spots	50	54 Blunder	17 Stir-fry	42	Bankroll
31 Long of "Soul Food"	51	55 Blunder	18 Stir-fry	43	Flamenco
32 Library lover	52	56 Blunder	19 Stir-fry	44	Not 'neath
	53	57 Blunder	20 Stir-fry	45	Aachen article

Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 12-6

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Lindsay Price, 43; Judd Apatow, 52; Tom Hulce, 66; JoBeth Williams, 71.

Happy Birthday: One step forward and two steps back won't help you reach your destination. Gauge your stride and plant your foot firmly on the ground in the direction you want to head. Turn this into a year of enlightenment, willful gains and living life your way. You have much to gain by doing what works best for you. Your numbers are 1, 8, 14, 25, 33, 36, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Move forward cautiously. Don't reveal your thoughts or intentions until you are positive the response will be favorable. Work behind closed doors perfecting your ideas and skills until you are happy with the results. Avoid opposition and interference. **★★★**

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A change will lift your spirits and lead to an exciting adventure. Discuss your plans with someone you love, and the momentum will build until you turn your ideas into a reality. Romance is on the rise and will enhance your relationship. **★★★**

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Your kindness and generosity should be given carefully. Not everyone will be deserving or respectful of you or what you have to offer. Use charm and diplomacy moving forward to spare yourself a costly experience. **★★★★**

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Silence is golden. If you want to make a change without any hassle, do so on your own. Trying to work alongside someone who is fight-

ing you every inch of the way will raise tempers and slow progress. Focus on what you are trying to achieve. **★★★**

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Talk less and do more. Keep moving; if you stop, someone will suck the energy out of you. Trust in your ability to get things done on your own. Arguments will be a waste of time and bring about unwanted change. **★★★★★**

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Emotions and money won't mix. You cannot buy love or happiness. Focus on doing something constructive with someone you love. A change to your surroundings will inspire you to get more involved in hosting events and improving family dynamics. **★★★**

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Plan to do something with someone you love. Remove yourself from situations and people who are demanding. A break will give you a different perspective regarding life and how you want to live. Take a positive step forward. **★★★**

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take action. Get moving, surround yourself with people you find inspiring and visit places that excite you. Expand your mind, improve your physical well-being and make changes that encourage you to do as you please. Romance is encouraged. **★★★**

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Express your willingness to get things done. Talk to someone in a position to help you, and get the lowdown on the best way to deal with sensitive situations. Taking care of business will lead to greater personal freedom. **★★**

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Emotional issues will disrupt your train of thought. Refuse to let your productivity suffer due to an altercation with someone who is trying to outmaneuver you. Be responsible, get your work done and move on to more pleasurable events. Keep the peace. **★★**

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Give more thought to the way you handle and earn your cash. Consider what you enjoy doing, and look for ways to incorporate what you love to do with bringing in extra money. Turn a hobby into something tangible. **★★★★**

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Use your skills to help a cause. Volunteering your time and services will encourage making new friends. An opportunity to get involved in a joint venture looks promising. Do your due diligence and forge ahead. Romance is in the stars. **★★**

Birthday Baby: You are ambitious, intense and respectful. You are charismatic and competitive.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

7	5	9		1					
1						5			
	5	4		2					
			9	4					
5						1			
3	2								
5									
3	2								
9									
4			1	5		7			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	1	4	6	5	2	8	9	3
2	9	8	7	3	1	5	6	4
6	3	5	9	8	4	7	1	2
3	4	9	8	1	6	2	7	5
8	6	7	5	2	3	1	4	9
1	5	2	4	7	9	6	3	8
9	8	6	2	4	7	3	5	1
5	7	3	1	9	8	4	2	6
4	2	1	3	6	5	9	8	7

Difficulty Level *****

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUDET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

VATICAN SECRET ARCHIVES

Solution: 11 letters

S	R	E	N	I	E	H	T	C	P	L	P	N	Y
A	R	E	L	I	④	I	O	N	K	O	O	A	G
N	C	O	A	S	①	T	E	C	V	M	P	M	R
T	N	A	L	P	S	②	K	E	A	C	E	E	E
A	L	A	T	R	O	I	③	H	T	R	R	S	L
N	E	U	I	A	O	S	G	C	I	U	S	L	C
N	P	L	A	T	L	S	T	T	U	C	S	D	A
A	A	Y	E	V	S	O	S	O	I	A	A	R	C
C	H	T	C	T	S	I	G	E	L	N	D	O	I
I	C	I	A	S	R	A	R	I	C	I	E	C	R
L	T	C	E	E	L	U	B	H	N	C	C	E	O
I	K	C	K	L	T	R	U	A	G	G	U	R	T
S	C	N	E	L</									

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Phillies lure Wheeler away from rival Mets

 **PHILADELPHIA (AP)**— The Philadelphia Phillies filled their biggest need quickly.

Right-hander Zack Wheeler and the Phillies agreed to a \$118 million, five-year contract, two people familiar with the deal told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Both people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the agreement, which is subject to a successful physical, had not been announced.

The 29-year-old Wheeler stays in the NL East after spending his first seven seasons with the New York Mets. He was 11-8 with a 3.96 ERA last season after going 12-7 with a 3.31 ERA in 2018. Wheeler missed the 2015 and 2016 seasons following Tommy John surgery.

He will join a rotation led by Aaron Nola that also includes Jake Arrieta. The Phillies may pursue another front-line starter—Stephen Strasburg, perhaps—to join a staff that has Zach Eflin, Vince Velasquez and Nick Pivetta.

“He knows all of us hitters very well,” Mets role player J.D. Davis said earlier in the day. “He’s a great pitcher, great stuff. I only wish the best for him.”

Wheeler chose less money to stay on the East Coast. The Chicago White Sox offered Wheeler a five-year contract worth more than \$120 million guaranteed, a person with direct knowledge of those negotiations said. That person spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation.



AP

New York Mets starting pitcher Zack Wheeler (45) winds up during the first inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019, in New York.

exercised a team option.

\$100M for Bumgarner?

The free-agent pitching market broke wide open Wednesday, but the biggest winner of the day might be Madison Bumgarner.

With the Philadelphia Phillies signing Wheeler and the Braves landing Hamels, those two teams are now out of the market now for Bumgarner, according to two executives familiar with the clubs’ thinking.

Yet, two club officials said that Bumgarner’s value is soaring in the aftermath of the deals, and expect him to command at least \$100 million in free agency. He’s widely considered the third-best remaining free-agent starter behind Gerrit Cole and Stephen Strasburg.

“I wouldn’t even be surprised if he gets more than Wheeler,” one NL official said. “It will be close. There’s really not that big of a difference when you look at it closely.”

Bumgarner, 30, is a year older, and while he may not have the same upside as Wheeler, the former Met doesn’t have Bumgarner’s resume. Wheeler has made more than 30 starts just once, has never thrown 200 innings and missed the entire 2015 and 2016 seasons following Tommy John surgery.

Bumgarner is a World Series hero, leading the San Francisco Giants to three titles, and is a four-time All-Star with three top-six Cy Young finishes. He has eclipsed 200 innings seven times in his career, including 2019, when he went 9-9 with a 3.90 ERA with 207 2/3 innings. The only two years he failed to pitch 200 innings were 2017 and 2018, both seasons cut short by freak injuries.

Bumgarner won three World Series titles with the Giants. Hamels said the Braves “were one of six teams I was really following and really rooting for” in free agency. He said Anthopoulos, the Braves general manager, was the first to initiate serious discussions.

“I reward the first team that actually does what they say they’re doing,” Hamels said, adding when a financial agreement was reached “boom, we were there and it was going to happen.”

Hamels said he is impressed by the Braves’ young talent.

“I’ve always been following them in hopes of maybe having an opportunity to pitch with some of those guys,” he said. “... I think what I can provide might be beneficial.”

Anthopoulos said he had interest in Hamels before the 2018 season, when the pitcher signed with the Cubs, and again last year, before Chicago

Philadelphia spent big money last season on free-agent outfielders Bryce Harper and Andrew McCutchen and acquired catcher J.T. Realmuto and shortstop Jean Segura in trades. The Phillies didn’t address starting pitching, and the staff’s struggles cost them in the second half as they faded to an 81-81 finish. Manager

Gabe Kapler was fired and replaced by Joe Girardi.

Wheeler is 44-38 with a 3.77 ERA in 126 starts. He has 726 strikeouts in 749 1/3 innings.

“He’s a great pitcher, but this whole division is stacked with pitchers,” Mets outfielder Brandon Nimmo said. “It’s just going to be tough day in and day out.”

Hamels to Braves

In Atlanta, Alex Anthopoulos believes Cole Hamels can help the Atlanta Braves win big in next season—and help the team’s young starters have more success for years to come.

Hamels, who turns 36 this month, agreed Wednesday to an \$18 million, one-year contract with the busy Braves, one of the more active teams this

offseason.

Anthopoulos said young Braves starters Max Fried and Mike Soroka will benefit from Hamels’ 14 seasons in the majors.

“How you quantify that is hard, but I think there is real value,” Anthopoulos said. “We’re signing Cole first and foremost because we think he’s going to help us win a lot of games ... and hopefully get to the World Series. No doubt in my mind ... I think Max Fried will get better just by seeing him and being around him. I think Soroka will get better.”

The Braves have won two straight NL East division titles but failed to win a playoff series.

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Woodland, Reed share lead at Hero

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP)

— As a player, Tiger Woods wasn’t all that happy with his game Wednesday in the Hero World Challenge. As the Presidents Cup captain, he had reason to be pleased.

U.S. Open champion Gary Woodland and Patrick Reed, who will be part of the U.S. team next week at Royal Melbourne, each managed a tough wind in the Bahamas to post a 6-under 66 and share the lead after the opening round of a tournament that felt more like a Presidents Cup tune-up.

Woods used two of his four captain’s picks on Woodland and Reed.

He used another on himself, and showed plenty of rust in his first tournament since Woods won the Zozo Championship in Japan the last week of October.

Woods made sloppy bogeys on both par 5s on the

front nine. He hit his stride on the back nine with a five-hole stretch he played in 5-under par, chipping in for eagle on the par-5 15th. That put him within three of the lead right up until he chopped his way to a bogey-double bogey finish for a 72.

“It was not a very good start,” Woods said. “Didn’t play the par 5s well early and then got it going on the back nine a little bit. Got myself right there in the mix and then bad shots on 17, 18.”

Woods has 11 of his 12 players for the Presidents Cup at his holiday exhibition, and it was clear what kind of pairings he had in mind for the matches that start Dec. 12 at Royal Melbourne.

He played with Justin Thomas, who had a 69. Reed played with Patrick Cantlay, his partner in the team event in New Orleans each of the last

three years. Woodland played with Xander Schauffele, while Bryson DeChambeau was paired with Webb Simpson and Rickie Fowler played with Tony Finau.

Matt Kuchar had a successful partnership with Dustin Johnson in two Ryder Cups. Johnson is not in the Bahamas, withdrawing last week to give his left knee one more week to get ready for the matches. Kuchar instead played with Chez Reavie, who replaced Johnson in the Bahamas.

Woods didn’t reveal any insight into his plans for next week, only that he wants open communication.

“I want to have all the players comfortable with who they’re playing with,” Woods said. “That’s why we’re communicating the way we are, so every guy has an understanding of when they’re playing,

what format they’re playing, who they’re playing with, the different options that could happen based on conditions, based on people’s form.

“Got to have all those different contingencies ready to go.”

Only 10 players from the 18-man field of players from the top 50 managed to break par on a course that typically allows for good scoring. The wind was strong and from the opposite direction, so strong that Woodland hit 5-iron into the par-4 18th, which typically is a short iron.

He even considered the wind while putting.

“Sometimes it’s better to miss the green than be in the middle of the green putting downwind,” Woodland said. “We tried to play into the wind all day today, and we did that. We controlled the golf ball enough where we did that and gave ourselves a lot of chances.”



Bucks top Pistons, extend winning streak to 13

DETROIT (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo was ready to go toe to toe with Blake Griffin during a second-quarter flareup between division rivals Milwaukee and Detroit.

The game was turning contentious. It wouldn't stay close for long.

"They're just a great defensive team and just play really physical," Antetokounmpo said. "They want to be physical, they want to be dirty. They want you to get out of your game, and whenever you come in Detroit, you expect that."

Antetokounmpo scored 35 points to lift the Bucks to their 13th consecutive victory, 127-103 over the Pistons on Wednesday night. The last time the Bucks had a longer winning streak than this was when they won 16 in a row spanning the end of the 1972-73 season and the beginning of 1973-74. They also had a 13-game run shortly after that 16-game streak ended.

Milwaukee won all eight matchups with the Pistons last season — four in the regular season and four in the first round of the playoffs. The Bucks also beat Detroit last month in their first meeting of 2019-20.

There were six technical fouls in this game, and there were words exchanged during a couple mild altercations. The first involved Antetokounmpo

and Griffin after those two collided around midcourt in the second quarter.

"There's going to be a lot of teams that are going to come out and try to be physical with me—try to hit me, knock me down to the floor," Antetokounmpo said. "I just got to keep my composure."

In the third quarter, Antetokounmpo fell to the ground after being fouled, and then Griffin stepped over him. Milwaukee's Khris Middleton came over to confront Griffin. Three technicals were assessed after that.

"That's going to happen. In a competitive game, it's going to happen," Pistons coach Dwane Casey said. "If anything, that should get you more focused, more riled up, more ready to play, more ready to compete and more ready to be physical and finish at the rim. All those things you have to do in a competitive game like that, a physical game like that."

The Bucks went on a 13-2 run late in the second quarter to lead 57-39, and although Detroit closed within 11 at the half, the Pistons never made a major run during the final two quarters. Antetokounmpo scored 12 points in the third, and Milwaukee led 92-72 after three.

"I liked our fire in the sec-



AP

Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) is defended by Detroit Pistons forward Blake Griffin (23) during the first half an NBA game, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019, in Detroit.

ond quarter. I liked our fire in general," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "I think the guys, they're in a good place. They're playing good basketball. So we'll keep it going."

Andre Drummond had 23 points and 14 rebounds for Detroit. Middleton had 17 points for the Bucks.

Lakers 121, Jazz 96

In Salt Lake City, Anthony Davis scored 26 points, LeBron James had 20 points and 12 assists and Los Angeles routed Utah.

Rajon Rondo added 14 points and a season-high 12 assists and season-high nine rebounds. Los Angeles cruised to an easy victory, outscoring Utah 32-5 in fast-break points and totaling 21 points off 19 Jazz turnovers.

Donovan Mitchell scored 29 points and Bojan Bogdanovic added 23 to lead Utah. The Jazz lost for the fifth time in six games.

Mavericks 121, Timberwolves 114

In Dallas, Dwight Powell had 24 points on 9-for-9 shooting from the field, Jalen Brunson ignited a fourth-quarter rally with 14 of his 16 points in the period and the Mavericks beat Minnesota.

Powell and Brunson both had season highs as the Mavericks overcame a subpar outing by Luka Doncic to win for the ninth time in 10

games. Doncic finished with 22 points, seven rebounds and six assists after picking up a technical foul in the third quarter and seeing his team rally with most of its starters on the bench.

Karl-Anthony Towns and Andrew Wiggins had 26 points apiece for Minnesota.

Celtics 112, Heat 93

In Boston, Jaylen Brown scored a season-high 31 points, Kemba Walker had 28 and the Celtics beat Miami to improve to 8-0 at home.

Brown connected on a season-high five 3-pointers, and Walker had seven assists and four rebounds. Jayson Tatum added 19 points.

Jimmy Butler led Miami with a season-high 37 points and had six rebounds and four assists. Heat coach Erik Spoelstra left the team in the morning, flying home to be with wife Nikki for the birth of their second son. Assistant coach Dan Craig ran the team.

Hornets 106, Warriors 91

In Charlotte, Devonte Graham made 10 3-pointers and scored 33 points and Charlotte beat Golden State to spoil D'Angelo Russell's return to the court.

Graham was 10 of 16 from beyond the arc and also had nine assists and had seven rebounds. Backcourt mate Terry Rozier added 25 points, seven

assists and seven rebounds.

Russell finished with 18 points on 7-of-13 shooting in 25 minutes after missing the last nine games with a right thumb sprain.

Nets 130, Hawks 118

In Atlanta, Garrett Temple scored a season-high 27 points, Spencer Dinwiddie had 18 of his 24 in the second half and Brooklyn beat the Hawks.

Taurean Prince finished with 23 points against his former team, and Jarrett Allen had 20 for the Nets, who were coming off a three-point home loss Sunday to Miami but have won six of eight.

Kyrie Irving missed his 10th straight game with a right shoulder impingement and did not make the two-game trip to stay home and rehab.

Trae Young scored 39 points and rookie Cam Reddish had a career-high 25 for Atlanta. The Hawks have lost 11 of 12.

Trail Blazers 127, Kings 116

In Portland, CJ McCollum scored 33 points and the Trail Blazers pulled away in the final quarter to beat the Sacramento Kings.

Hassan Whiteside added 22 points and 16 rebounds, as well as a career-high seven assists. Damian Lillard had 24 points and 10 assists in Portland's third straight home victory. Carmelo Anthony finished with 20 points, his fourth

game with 20 or more in seven games with the Blazers.

Richauna Holmes had 28 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings.

Magic 128, Suns 114

In Orlando, Aaron Gordon scored a season-high 32 points, Terrence Ross had 22 and Orlando beat Phoenix.

Evan Fournier added 21 points, and Markelle Fultz had 13 points, five assists and four rebounds for the Magic. Frank Kaminsky led the Suns with 23 points and five rebounds, and Devin Booker had 17 points and five assists.

Pacers 107, Thunder 100

In Oklahoma City, T.J. Warren scored 24 points to help Indiana beat the Thunder.

Domantas Sabonis added 17 points and 13 rebounds for the Pacers. They have won seven of eight.

Steven Adams scored 20 points on 8-for-8 shooting and Danilo Gallinari and Dennis Schroder each added 18 points for the Thunder.

Bulls 106, Grizzlies 99

In Chicago, Zach LaVine scored 25 points, Wendell Carter Jr. had 16 points and 13 rebounds and the Bulls held off Memphis.

Lauri Markkanen added 15 points for the Bulls.

Jonas Valanciunas had 32 points and 13 rebounds for Memphis.

Ibrahimovic fuels talk of Serie A return

MILAN—Sweden footballer Zlatan Ibrahimovic has fuelled speculation that he is set to return to Italy, where he has played for AC Milan, Inter Milan and Juventus, by saying in an interview: "see you soon in Italy".

The 38-year-old striker confirmed his departure from Los Angeles Galaxy last month following the club's elimination from the Major League Soccer playoffs.

"I'll join a club which must get back to winning, which must renew its history and is in search of a battle against everyone and everything," Ibrahimovic said. "That is the only way I'll be able to find the necessary motivation to surprise you again."

"It's not just about choosing a team, as there are other factors that need to line up, including in the interests of my family. I'll see you in Italy soon," he added.

According to reports in Italy, Ibrahimovic has been offered a six-month deal to come to the aid of struggling former giants AC Milan, who are 11th in the Serie A table.

Napoli are also a possible destination as last season's runners-up sit seventh, after



a run of six league games without a win.

"I love to make the difference," he added. "I don't just want to do one or two things well, I want to do all of it."

Ibrahimovic played for two seasons between 2010 and 2012 with AC Milan, helping them to their last Serie A title, and scoring 42 goals in 61 league appearances.

He also won three league titles with Inter Milan, and two with Juventus, which were both revoked following the 'Calciopoli' match-fixing scandal.

Meanwhile, American midfielder Tyler Adams is finally returning to training with RB Leipzig.

Adams, 20, played in 12 matches for the Bundesliga side last season, and Leipzig only lost two.

He'd missed USMNT duty at the Gold Cup as well as the entire RBL preseason with a groin problem, as well as Leipzig's first three months.

In his absence, the club is a point off the league lead and has already advanced to the knockout rounds of the UEFA Champions League under new coach Julian Nagelsmann.

No time for talk, Cowboys need to beat Bears



LAKE FOREST, Ill. (AP) — Dak Prescott saw no need for strong words or fiery speeches.

The Dallas Cowboys have lost six of nine since a 3-0 start, and all their star quarterback cares about is finding a way to win consistently again.

They will try to get headed back in the right direction when they visit the Chicago Bears on Thursday night in a matchup between disappointing 6-6 teams that made the playoffs last season.

“Talk is cheap right? We’ve talked a lot,” Prescott said. “We’ve talked a bunch and got ourselves right to where we are. In a moment like this I say hell with the talking and I’m going to do more. I’m going to work harder and if you’re a young guy looking for somebody to figure it out, how to do it, yeah, look at me and some of these other guys because that’s exactly what we’re doing—putting our head down focusing and doubling down on ourselves.”

The Cowboys came into the season with high expectations after winning the NFC East, and they looked like they were



ready to deliver in the early going. Dallas averaged 32 points and 481 yards in its first 3-0 start since 2008, winning each of those games by at least 10 points. But in recent weeks, the team with the NFL’s leading passer and No. 1 offense is having trouble scoring.

The Cowboys were kept out of the end zone in a 13-9 loss at New England two weeks ago, then managed two touchdowns in falling 26-15 to Buffalo on Thanksgiving. Despite all that, they still hold a one-game lead over Philadelphia in the division. But

they will be facing a top 10 defense for the third straight week when they meet Khalil Mack and the Bears.

Chicago has won three of four after losing four in a row, though two of those victories were against the Lions and the other was over the Giants.

Detroit and New York are a combined 5-18-1, and the Lions started backup quarterbacks Jeff Driskel and David Blough with Matthew Stafford injured.

“It speaks to the direction of where we could’ve went in that four-game slide,” Bears coach Matt Nagy said. “I thought it revealed a lot of who we were as a team and who we are as people. No one not one time started pointing fingers. ... That’s a credit to our players for battling through that. It makes you proud to be their coach.”

Amari Cooper’s strong production since joining the Cowboys in a midseason trade last year hasn’t translated on the road in his first full season with Dallas. The receiver has 47 catches, 758 yards and five touchdowns in six home games, and 17 catches for 213 yards and two scores on the road.

For Cooper, the more important numbers are 60 and 32.

Buffalo Bills safety Jordan Poyer (21) applies pressure, as Dallas Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott (4) throws a pass in the first half of an NFL football game in Arlington, Texas, Thursday, Nov. 28, 2019.

That’s the difference in targets between home and road games. Cooper isn’t one to complain, and isn’t doing so by pointing out those numbers.

“It’s just like basketball,” said Cooper, who is still fifth in the league in yards receiving (971) and tied for fifth in TD catches (seven). “You shoot the ball more, you’re going to have more points. If you only have two shots, then you only score four points.”

Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky is on a bit of a roll the past four games after struggling for most of the season. He was 29 of 38 for a season-high 338 yards with three touchdowns—one in the closing minutes—to lead the Bears to a 24-20 win at Detroit on Thanksgiving. Trubisky is 94 of 145 for 979 yards, eight touchdowns, four interceptions and a 91.1 rating in the past four games. The three wins came against last-place teams, and he will be going against a top 10 defense this week.

The Cowboys finally brought in kickers for tryouts after Brett Maher had two big misses in the loss to Buffalo, pushing his NFL-leading total to nine misses. Dallas decided against signing a replacement, for now.

Maher has been one of the most interesting riddles in a season full of them for the Cowboys. He’s the only kicker in NFL history with three kicks of at least 60 yards — all three from at least 62. But he has the second-lowest success rate from 30-49 yards at 55% (6 of 11).

in the 18th and 19th minute.

Audrey Castro nailed the lone goal (18th minute) for TanHoldings, while Marinel Falalimpa added one more for Southern United in the second half (37th).

In other Division B results last weekend, Shirley’s Football Club outclassed Kanoa, 5-1.

Sisters Marilou Arriola and Marrielle Gariguez logged two goals apiece for Shirley’s, while Jhaza Mirano contributed one. Arriola had her first goal in the 12th minute and the second in the 39th, while her younger sister duplicated the feat after scoring in the 13th and 49th. Jhaza gave Shirley’s its first goal when she scored in the sixth minute, while Kanoa’s only goal was also recorded in the opening half with Arianne Antonio hitting her target in the 11th.

6 teams start bid in UFO caging



Six more teams are set to make their debuts in the Open Division of the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League this weekend at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

This Saturday, The Game will take on Pacific Islands Club in the curtain raiser at 4pm, while HRP will battle Gilas Batang in the second match at 6pm. In the third game at 7:30pm, RNV Construction will debut against the Hoopaholics.

For the Sunday schedule, Lakay and Toyota will collide in the lone Open Division game at 6pm, while two matches in the Masters will take place. In the first game at 4pm, Old School will face PP Gen, while in the third match at 7:30pm, it will be JNS versus Saipan Vegas.

Lakay and Toyota both dropped their opening games so they are hoping to bounce back quickly. Blue Eagle defeated



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hoopaholics players and their muse pose for a photo during the opening ceremony for the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. The Hoopaholics will debut against RNV Construction this Saturday.

Lakay, 104-64, last Saturday, while Islander Rent A Car topped AK Toyota last Sunday, 96-57.

Meanwhile, four more teams played their first game

in the UFO caging with Shirley’s Coffee Shop squaring off against Saipan Vegas MJD in the Open Division last night and Pacific Marine Shop

in the Masters Division. Results of these matches will be reported in *Saipan Tribune*’s Monday edition. (*Kimberly A. Bautista*)

meeting IT&E in the Masters

Division. Results of these

matches will be reported in

Saipan Tribune’s Monday edition. (*Kimberly A. Bautista*)

Stage race.

Nagatsuka is a member of the Yowamushi Pedal Cycling Team, one of the Japan Bicyclist Club Federation Pro Tour squads. Biffinger, on the other hand, is with Taylor Cycles Team and finished first in the Toowoombah 160K Road Race and Noosa 160K Classic, and seventh in the Queensland State Time Trial.

‘HELL’

From Page 32

Nieto also joined the 2018 Tour de Singkarak and Tour de Molvcass in Indonesia, 2016 Stage Jelajah and 2019 Tour of Peninsular in Malaysia, 2017 Tour of Xingtai in China, and the 2017 Le Tour de Filipinas in the Philippines.

This year, the Spaniard raced in Tour of Fuzhou and Tour of Quanzhou Bay in China, Tour of Peninsular, International Tour de Banyuwangi Ijen, Tour of Indonesia, Tour de Iskander Johor in Malaysia, and Ronda Pilipinas in the Philippines.

In the Hell of Marianas this Saturday, Nieto will be up against Marko Pavlic of Slo-

venia, Toshiki Nagatsuka of Japan, Kevin Biffinger of Australia, and Hong Kong’s Hei Nok Wong, Christopher Chung Who, and Felix Yuen Chi Ho.

Pavlic had a busy 2019, as he participated in the the Larry H. Miller Tour of Utah, White Spot Delta Road Race, Tour de Beauce, Tour of Taiyuan, Tour of Gila, and Joe Martin

Stage race.

Nagatsuka is a member of the Yowamushi Pedal Cycling Team, one of the Japan Bicyclist Club Federation Pro Tour squads. Biffinger, on the other hand, is with Taylor Cycles Team and finished first in the Toowoombah 160K Road Race and Noosa 160K Classic, and seventh in the Queensland State Time Trial.

In Division B, Southern

United got a pair of goals from

Keisha Deleon Guerrero

and one from Nathanielle Blas

for a 3-1 halftime advantage.

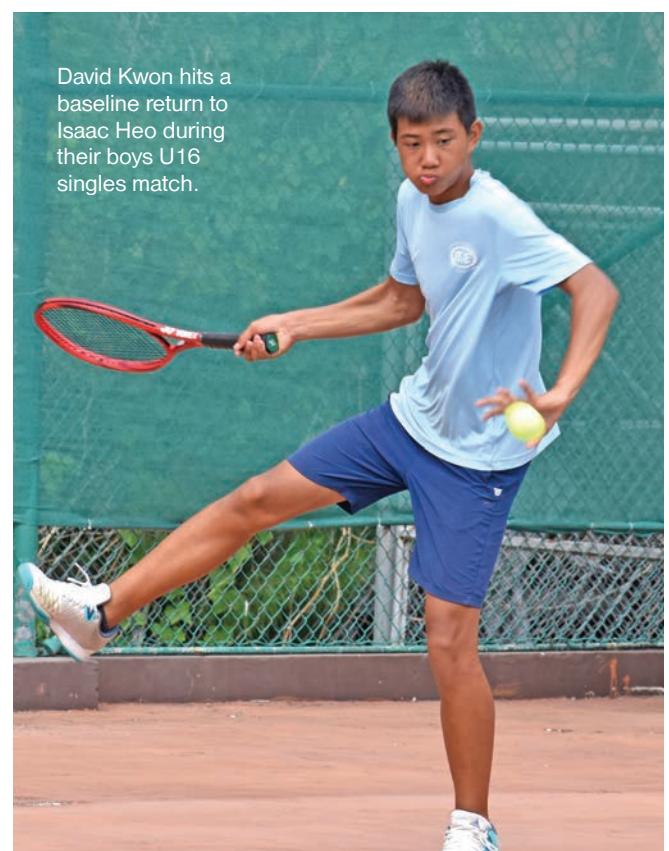
Blas drew first blood with her shot in

the sixth minute, while Deleon

Guerrero posted her twin goals

10th TanHoldings Tennis Classic

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO





Phillies lure
Wheeler
away from
rival Mets

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Bucks top
Pistons, extend
winning
streak to 13

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

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Tanapag rallies past SIS



KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
A Tanapag Middle School player reaches for the ball during their game against Saipan International School in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Tanapag Middle School outlasted Saipan International School in an extended game in the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League last Wednesday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.



The Tanapag-SIS duel was contested in three sets with the Geckos taking the first set, 21-12, to inch closer to victory. However, Tanapag fought back and eked out a 22-20 victory in the second set to force a deciding third. In the final set, Tanapag and SIS went back and forth and neither team seemed willing to give in until the former delivered in the homestretch and escaped with a 16-14 triumph to complete the come-from-behind win.

Meanwhile, Hopwood Middle School 1, Agape Christian School, Mount Carmel School 1 Dandan Middle School 2, Francisco M. Sablan Middle School, and Chacha Ocean-

off the Hilitais with a 21-15 win in the second. Dandan 1 duplicated the Eagles' sweep after topping Mt. Carmel 2, 21-12, 21-10.

The round-robin matches in the middle school league will continue today with Hop-

wood 1 battling Mt. Carmel 1, Hopwood 3 facing FMS, and Chacha 1 challenging Agape on the north court. On the south court, it will be SIS against DMS 1, Chacha 2 versus Tanapag, and Hopwood 2 over Mt. Carmel 2.

Southern United, TanHoldings win



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Southern United Football Club's Nathanette Blas tries to control possession, while Kanoa Football Club's Marie Aldan stays back during an earlier game in Division B of the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League at the TSL Sports Complex.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Dove Southern United Football Club and TanHoldings Football Club eased past their respective opponents in the 2019 Dove Women's Fall League last weekend at the TSL Sports Complex.

In Division B, Southern United downed TanHoldings FC, 4-1, while the latter was victorious in its Division A match versus Matansa, 9-5.

Kaithlyn Chavez towed TanHoldings to a win after firing five six goals. She was on target in the first half af-

See SOUTHERN on
Page 30

Seasoned rider to debut in 'Hell'

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Veteran Spanish pro Edgar Nohales Nieto will be tested tomorrow when he competes in the 12th Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle Race.

Nieto has been joining tournaments across Asia for a decade, but this will be his first time to participate in Saipan's premier bike race—a 100-kilometer tour around the scenic spots on the island.

Besides the Tour de Flores,

See 'HELL' on Page 30



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Spanish pro Edgar Nohales Nieto leads a peloton during one of the Union Cycliste Internationale Asia Tour races he joined in Indonesia.